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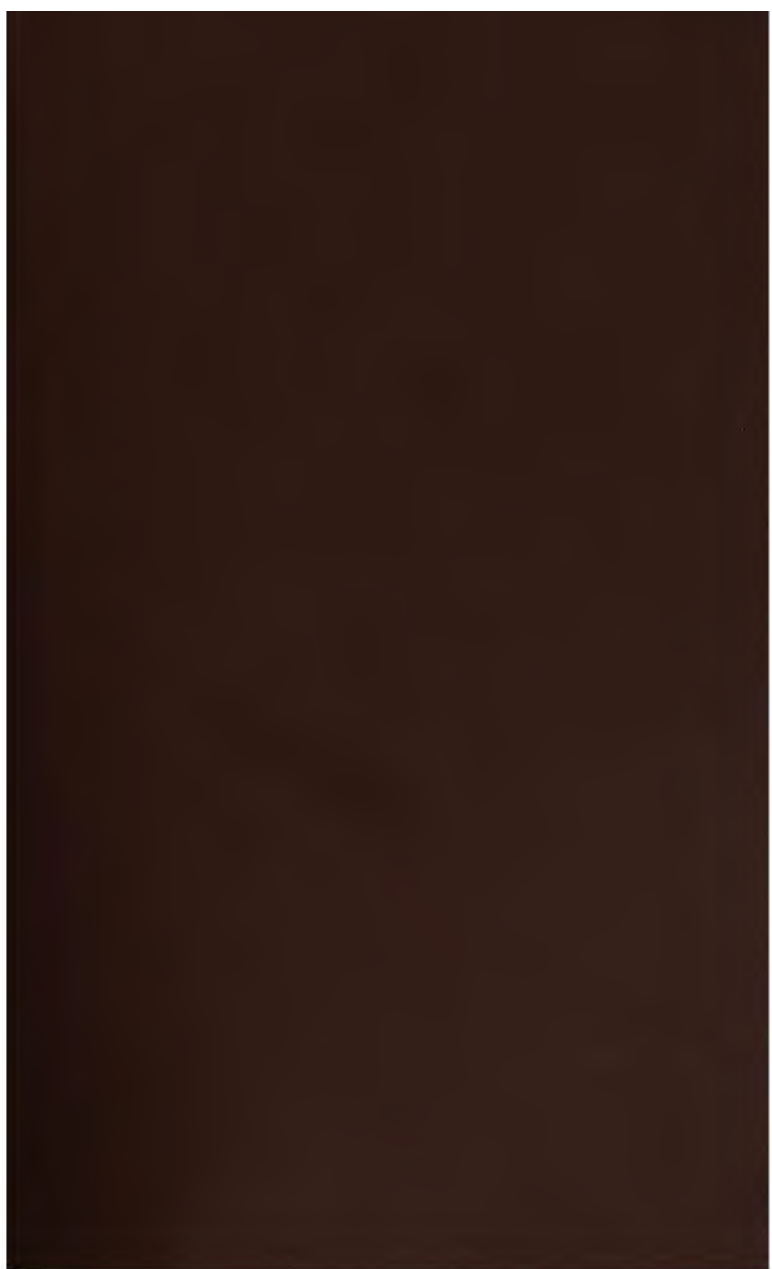
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Cruel as 'grain' S 5-20

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In Xe, 14 - 811

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they be withered, Micah 2, 8

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It is commonly reported -

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These horrible and right words  
Seeing 'not of man' a friend in me

The horse appointed in all time  
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While I was raising fire in me  
PS 89, 4

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that men & women  
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A word of exhortation

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Then is a ~~leaf~~ in the  
Iron sharpener  
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Too little  
11 11  
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11 5-12  
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KNOWLEDGE AND FAITH

AND

OTHER DISCOURSES

BY

OCTAVIUS BROOKS FROTHINGHAM



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# KNOWLEDGE AND FAITH.

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It is always timely to speak about faith, and it is especially timely in an age like this, when Faith has fallen into something like discredit and the offices of faith are imperfectly understood and feebly appreciated. We have all heard of the "Ages of Faith." They were ages in which faith was all in all; when faith stood for knowledge, was the avenue through which all wisdom was expected to come, not only in the department of divine things—theology, as it was called,—nor only in the domain of metaphysics—philosophy, as it is named; but even in the region of external nature; in regard to the knowledge of the material world, faith was held to be the supreme judge and revealer.

In such an age, Science, though by no means in its infancy, was remanded to a subordinate position. The scientific man was considered secondary to the

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It is commonly reported -

ogy, and the sceptre of the unseen world from its hand. Faith assumes the attitude of an apologist.

At present these two powers, Faith and Knowledge, stand face to face with lowering looks and angry voices. Faith calls knowledge an upstart and intruder, wilful, overbearing, impudent, a rude barbarian forcing its way into the temple, with sacrilegious weapons to break the holy images, with unhallowed feet desecrating the sacred precincts. It asks questions it has no right to ask, and gives answers it has no right to give. Its method is mechanical; its aim low and near; its results barren and fallacious. Science calls faith an unauthorized occupant of territory that belongs to another; it can *know* nothing, only conjecture; it has no foothold on certainty; it cannot in any particular say "*It is*," only "*Perhaps it is*." Its methods are loose; its aim is visionary; its results are dreams. The welfare of man, we hear on all sides, depends upon knowledge, and knowledge is acquaintance with things as they are, with visible and tangible phenomena.

Now so far as one may, in a discourse of an hour, let me endeavor to say an honest word in behalf of this dispossessed attribute, at present so unceremoniously thrown into the shade. Admitting all that can fairly be said against it, and confining it to its own sphere, let us consider its claims to respect and the *grounds on which the claim rests*.

The jealousy that knowledge entertains of faith is natural—nay, it is inevitable, and it is in part faith's fault that such mistrust is entertained. For, in the first place, faith has allowed itself to be misunderstood. The word faith has been misused to its own peril and discredit. Thus people, and educated people, speak of faith as if it were the same thing with credence; of the "Christian faith," the "Mahomedan faith," the "Buddhist faith,"—meaning the Christian, Mahomedan or Buddhist system of belief. Now, it is against this system of belief, this formal arrangement of doctrines, this final statement of speculative opinion that knowledge protests. Here is a serious abuse of words. Faith, strictly speaking, is not responsible for opinion in any department; it is not committed to dogma; it cannot be confounded with any kind of credence. Faith is a tendency of the mind; a direction or set of the intellect,—just as knowledge is a tendency of the mind, and science a direction of the intellect. Science works with the understanding; Faith with the imagination. Science concerns itself with what can be known; Faith with what as yet has not been revealed. Science deals with the past and the present; Faith fixes its eye on the future. The organ of Science is observation; the organ of Faith is intuition. Faith *goes before* knowledge at every step, to feel out the

way in advance, to occupy provisionally and temporarily the ground which Science will occupy permanently bye-and-bye; perpetually receding before the advance of Science and thankfully surrendering the territory when Science is prepared to fill and develop it. Did we know everything, we could have no faith. Did we know nothing, we could have none. In the Greek myth Apollo challenges Jove to shoot. The supreme Jove accepts. The sun god, takes his stand, draws his bow, and sends a shaft out of sight to the extreme verge of creation. Jove strides forward to take his position and is already at the confines of creation. There is no room to shoot. The infinite mind is incapable of faith, because the infinite mind is Omniscient. The beastly mind is incapable of Faith because the beastly mind is vacant. If we knew everything, faith would have no world to range over. If we knew nothing, faith would have no pedestal to stand upon. Faith pre-supposes knowledge; as men, when they set up a telescope, build first a solid pillar of masonry, running down its foundations till they stand upon the solid rock, for the instrument that is to sweep the night heavens and follow the path of the farthest star must not tremble or be moved by the breadth of a hair; so faith that loves to sweep those invisible skies of which the night heavens are but the visible emblem,

must be planted on the best knowledge that can be obtained,—knowledge that is rock not cloud.

It calls on science to furnish the best material at its command, proved, tried, demonstrable facts, that are not at the mercy of windy disputation; that are immovable by whim, caprice, conjecture. It even rebukes science for its slowness in providing granite without flaw and iron without slag.

The trouble is that faith claims to rest on knowledge when it rests on fancy. And here again is a chief cause of the quarrel which knowledge has with it, making an issue with faith itself, when the real issue is with the basis that faith assumes and plants itself upon. Faith claims to rest upon fact, and its fact is fiction; claims to rest upon history, and its history is mythology; claims to rest upon the fiat of the Creator, and the “fiat of the Creator” turns out to be an illusion and a fable.

Thus the missionary in the spirit of faith, goes to foreign lands, among strange and savage people; endures every species of hardship, hunger, thirst, exposure to death, spending happiness and life, in a spirit of heroism and consecration that is worthy of all praise. But what is the ground of his faith? It is that the particular system of doctrine which he carries is necessary to save the world; that unless all mankind accept this particular thing which he

calls Gospel, they must drift away into endless sorrow or eternal death. Now, that is a fiction. We are sure that no one religion is necessary to save the world. We are sure that no particular creed among all the creeds that diversify the face of the earth at present, has such supremacy over the rest that it can or should put them under its feet. We know that men go on, progress, improve individually and socially, make their lives orderly, secure and happy, some without Christianity, some without Mahomedanism, some without Buddhism. The knowledge that comparative religion gives, assures us that the missionary's faith rests upon vapor. The missionary's devotion may be noble in quality, though its ground be illusory. Science, regarding only the intellectual ground, passes the grandeur of the faith by.

The revival preacher is a man of faith, indeed of wondrous faith. He has faith that this nineteenth century will sit at the feet of the Cross, whether through his word or that of some other, whether through his ministration or some future nobler ministration, that work will, in his judgment, certainly be achieved; the "Word" will prevail, and the world will be converted. On what ground does this faith rest? That is the question. There is no question about the faith,—that the preacher is intensely, absorbingly in earnest is conceded; but when we ask for the foun-



dations of the faith, we find that it rests upon a theological fiction. The evangelist believes that at the commencement of man's career, three distinct and divine personages named respectively Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, held a conclave at which was entertained the problem of Humanity, its earthly course and its eternal destiny. At this conclave the Father made a proposition to the Son which the Son accepted; in consequence of which, he descended to earth, assumed the garment of mortality, submitted to the death of the Cross, bore in his own person the pains and penalties due to the wickedness of the world, and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers in Him. Now, that is a dramatic representation of purely fictitious character. There is not a shadow of evidence of such transactions. We feel confident that such a proceeding never did, and never could occur. It is out of the range of rational belief; and it is no disparagement to the Evangelist's faith to say as much.

The members of the Bible Society have faith that enables them to spend money by millions for the dissemination of a book; they work printing presses without number; they employ colporteurs—a legion of them—to place the volume in every house, in every city, town, village on the continent. It is a work of faith, very absolute and resolute faith.

But what does it rest upon? It rests upon the belief that the Bible as it stands—the Jewish and Christian Bible—is the “Word of God.” We are persuaded that it is not in any peculiar sense the Word of God. If there is anything clear to Science, through criticism, history, philology, paleontology, it is that this particular book voices the mind of a nation in many moods, and is not the “Word of God,” in any such sense as the Society thinks. The faith of the Society rests upon an illusion. There is no objection to the faith; but grave objection to the foundation on which it rests. ✓

Once more: If there is a man living on the globe who is completely possessed by the spirit of faith, it is Pius the Ninth, the ruling Pope of Rome. His faith bids him maintain, in the face of history, that the Roman Church has the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven, and alone can use them; that every other form of Christianity, Greek, English, German, must come back at last to this form, and that all religion outside of Christianity must submit to his dominion. This, again, is a fiction. We positively know it to be a fiction. It is not an open question, but one that has been answered for three centuries. The history of the Church is before us. We trace its beginning, its continuing, its culmination and its decline. We know about its origin and the means ✓

by which it has raised itself to supremacy. We know that the Pope's claim is not just. He is doubtless a sincere and honest man; but the pillar upon which he plants his telescope is a wreath of mist.

Perhaps the most stupendous example of faith that has been exhibited to the American people for the last half century is that of the Mormons. No one who reads the history of that extraordinary people can fail to be impressed with the resolution, patience, courage, fortitude and utter sincerity with which the multitude of them have wrought. The story of their trials where they were first established, of their journey across the desert, of the terrible sufferings that they endured on the march, the occupancy of their new home in Utah, is most touching; no one can read it without being profoundly impressed by its heroism. There is faith, an all conquering faith, a superb manifestation of faith,—but what does it rest upon? One of the meanest and cheapest of modern delusions; the idea that Joseph Smith was an inspired prophet, that the Mormon Bible was a fresh revelation, that miracles and signs attended the “saints” throughout their strange career! No historian who has examined the question has a shadow of doubt that Mormonism is one of the poorest and grossest kinds of superstition. Therefore we discredit, not the faith which stands upon

its own merits and wins its own praise, but the basis upon which the faith reposes.

Here, then, is the issue that science joins with faith: So long as faith insists that it will and can be responsible for the fictions, fables, idle traditions of men, it will have in knowledge a deadly foe.

But now to come back to the heart of the question. Remembering what faith is; that it is not knowledge, credence, belief, a system of formulas, but simply a direction of the mind toward that which at present is unseen, unfelt, undiscovered, apparently undiscoverable, we shall see that not only has faith its place and work, but that the place and work are admitted by science itself.

For the scientific man lives by faith, in this sense: faith in the integrity of Nature, the omnipresence and inviolability of law, the equivalence of forces; faith that "the universe was made at one cast," that mechanics and mathematics are the same in all worlds, that sand grains and planets obey the same kind of impulse; faith of a truly audacious and somewhat speculative sort.

The method of science is tentative. First, the observation of facts; next a generalization based upon those facts; next, an attempt through the generalization established to look further into the region of undiscovered fact, to feel its way as it were, into

that which is thus far concealed. Thus science throws out feelers into a dim domain, fine and sensitive tentacles, guessing, conjecturing, surmising whether what it has gained so far is solid ground on which it can proceed further. Is it a misuse of words to describe these anticipatory divinations, these long antennæ thus cautiously thrust out into the future as an operation of faith? We have the authority of Emerson for thus describing them. "The savans are chatty and vain, but hold them hard to a principle and definition, and they become mute and near-sighted. Push them hard and they will not be loquacious. They will come to Plato, Proclus and Swedenborg." "Science was false by being unpoetical."

Thirty years ago a French mathematician and astronomer was revising the calculations in regard to the orbit of Uranus. Uranus was a planet that had long and greatly puzzled the astronomers,—a wayward, uncertain, vagabond orb, which would not travel a straight path, but was perpetually turning out of the way and deviating from its course at special points in its track. Leverrier, watching these symptoms, by close calculation estimating its distance from the Earth, measuring its periods of aberration, their duration and extent, conjectured that afar off, out of the sight of the eye of the keenest telescope,

there must be another disturbing body. Calling into use his mathematics, he divined the place of that orb, its distance, its circuit, and foretold that on a certain day it would appear on the field of vision. The prophecy being given out through the scientific world, as the time drew nigh a hush of expectation fell upon the minds of men; when the night approached for the predicted vision, in different parts of the globe telescopes were turned toward the hitherto blank space in the heavens; and when, precisely at the moment, a bright star glided into presence, another hush fell upon the scientific world; hearts were shaken with an emotion that could find no expression but that of tears. The astronomer's faith was faith no longer. Who knew that the orb was there? It had never been seen, men of science were incredulous. Leverrier planted himself upon this great assumption, an assumption by no means universally conceded, that in all parts of the universe there reigned Order, System and Beauty; that God was the great mathematician, and that the laws of mathematics held good in the counsels of the Eternal, and the observatory of the saven. He did not believe with some that twice two, in other worlds than ours, might make five, that elsewhere a circle and a square might be the same form, or resolvable the one into the other.



A few years ago in England a naturalist was classifying bone fossils. Among them was a bone that evidently from its shape, belonged to the jaw of a creature that was extinct. He at once conceived the idea of reconstructing the animal. Having that particular bone he knew what kind of a jaw it must belong to; having the jaw, the head to which it belonged; having the head the neck followed; having the neck the body was a matter of course; the successive analysis suggested an outline of this extinct and undiscovered creature. There was in scientific quarters a laugh at the enthusiast's expense. But he insisted that such a creature did actually live on the globe, and later exploration justified the faith. Was not that a sublime declaration of faith; faith grounded on the assumption that the plan of creation was the same at all epochs in all parts of creation, that the type on which all animals were made was preserved; that the extinct creatures were built upon the same plan with the living; and that by following that plan the extinct world could be reproduced! And the faith justifies itself, because it is on the assumption of the unity of man, the systematic order of development, the symmetry of parts, that great discoveries in science are made.

When David Livingston penetrated into the interior of Africa, he went on faith: Faith that there

was a new field for civilization; that an immense continent like that was not to be left to the desert sands; that the people there were human creatures. The result justified his faith, and geography to-day is commemorating the mighty achievements which Livingston accomplished by believing where he had not seen.

Thus science accepts faith, not in place of knowledge, but to supplement knowledge in its last inference, to feel the way into undiscovered countries. Science no longer uses the word faith because its methods are so sure, its achievements so prompt, and its results so ample; but should it discredit the tools it actually uses, its success would be less complete.

Come we now to Social Science, the world of society. Here, observe, the function of faith is much larger and more necessary, and for this reason: that knowledge here is incipient and small, the observers are few, the facts are scanty, and hard to test. We speak of Social Science,—but Social Science is hardly born; it is a creature of yesterday. Its methods are not formulated; its results are not tabulated. Social Science is in its infancy. One of these days we may know enough about the constitution of society to be able to proceed wisely, deliberately, and justly, to remedy the evils of mankind. At present, we must feel our way. Thus far, the best achieve-



ments in the reformation of the evils of the world have been won by faith, not by knowledge.

It is not too late yet to speak of the agitation against the institution of Slavery which, thirty or forty years ago, before many of those that hear me were born, convaled all our hearts. A few men, humble, obscure, of no repute, and no riches, undertook to overthrow one of the most powerful, firmly seated and wealthy institutions on the surface of the earth. By writing, speech, personal influence alone they undertook this gigantic task. They went forth in faith. Everything was against them, opinion, institution, fashion, history, philosophy as it was called, even ethics and religion. The physiologist said, the African is not a human creature; he is a cross between the man and the orang, you can do nothing with him; emancipate him—you lay a burden on civilization and do him no good. The historian said, show me an instance in the records of mankind in which the black man has shown himself capable of improvement. All tradition was against reform. Still the reformer went on, grounding his faith upon a great assumption which in his view was a principle. It was this: that God had made of one blood all nations of men; that every creature made in the form of a man had the capacity and possibilities of man; that the institution

of slavery was mistaken and grossly cruel ; that in a Republican form of government, it was an unrighteous inconsistency ; that if liberty was good for one race it was for another. Pure abstractions, based upon feelings of the heart, upon convictions of the conscience, upon intuitions of the soul ! With these abstractions the men went forth to the mighty work of revolutionizing the nation, and so conscientiously they did it, so successfully too, that when the war came the sword that the North threw into the scale was sure to conquer, for it was the sword of the Spirit.

The Temperance reformers do their work by faith. Knowledge is divided on the subject of their cause. Science has two opinions. Physiology by no means utters the same voice. But it is shown clearly that a large part of the poverty, pauperism, misery, crime, degradation and wretchedness of the present men and women is due to excess in drinking spirituous liquors. So far knowledge goes. The rest is assumption—assumption that by their complete abolition, a regeneration in society will be effected. The assumption may be mistaken, but the faith grounded upon it is noble and generous, and it is achieving great things for society. If the basis should prove to be a false one, the faith, notwithstanding, will have done its work.

abolition

and

The advocate of the abolition of the gallows works in faith. Knowledge is with him to a certain extent. The mitigation of the penal code has been thus far for the advantage and safety of society. The reformer collects such knowledge as there is upon the matter; not much, not well defined, not exactly tabulated; still, a few solid facts. He plants himself upon those, and in their name demands that the penal code shall be purged entirely of the last vestige of vengeance. He says Love is stronger than Hate, Hope is more powerful than Fear. Believe and trust the heart; throw yourselves upon the instincts of kindness, and they will carry you through. Planting himself upon these abstract principles, he ventures to anticipate a new day.

So it is that those who are engaged on social questions still more complicated and difficult,—where facts are fewer and less clear in outline, dare to labor and have patience to wait. The women reformers are of these. Their facts are exceedingly few, yet the men of ardent faith, earnest hope, large sympathy,—the men whose ideal of the society of the future is high, stand upon this principle, extend a hand to their sister, and say, come up boldly, and when you have come up to our level we shall see that the fears and apprehensions of the timid were idle in this field of social reform, if we proceeded

only by knowledge, went no faster than we were certain, took no step until our foot was planted on absolutely solid ground, we should stop altogether.

There is not material justification for large and hopeful enterprise, for heroism, or saintliness, the achievements of the martyr spirit; yet these are demanded, and for these we call upon the spirit of faith. ✓

But it is in the sphere of religion that we most feel the need of faith, and the importance of its offices; because here the ground is hardly mapped out by science at all. Here the facts are exceedingly few. Here observation can hardly bring its instruments to bear upon a single inch of the way. For religion occupies an interior sphere, the region of sentiment, of feeling, hope, aspiration, desire, sympathy. Its objects are unseen; its limit is unknown. Science brings its instruments and lays them down; for no foot treads its green pastures, no ear hears the sound of its still waters. The world of psychology is to a large extent an unexplored region. Its light shines from no visible sun; its shadow falls from no apparent cloud. Its forests with their mystic depths are accessible to no explorer, but to the soft tread of Love and Trust. Here faith alone finds its way. Science is made welcome to come, is thankfully invited to come and occupy the ground and find out

all there is to be known. But when the utmost is known that can be known, the region of truth will remain a vast outlying territory which the angels inhabit, and where Faith and Trust are at home.

Religion centres upon three cardinal points : first, the conception of moral Order, Symmetry and Beauty in the world ; not necessarily implying a doctrine, even a doctrine of pure Theism vague and spiritual enough for the latest mood of the scientific mind, but simply presuming a faith in moral Order and Beauty, in the close sequence of things throughout the created world. Religion speaks the word God, though it does not define it. But the fact expressed in that word, how continually it eludes science. We cannot prove that the world is orderly, harmonious, systematic or beautiful. We may surmise it, conjecture it, believe it ; but demonstrate it we cannot. What a very short tether has the argument from design ! Even suppose the argument were good so far as it goes, which is disputed, what a very short distance it goes ! What a little way we have traced causes and sequences ! How few things we are absolutely sure of ! To prove that there is a purpose in anything is beyond the ability of man. What then ? Shall we sit down and say, Because the thing is not proven, therefore we have no right to believe it ? We do instinctively believe it, partly because there is still a

deep persuasion in our hearts that Intelligence pervades the world ; that the creation as it is, proceeded forth from a perfect mind. Yes, although that be entirely inconceivable to us—although we have no power of guessing what kind of a mind a perfect mind may be, still, the impression of mind, of intelligence, haunts our spirits. But a perfect mind must have perfect wisdom : with perfect wisdom must go perfect will ; perfect will supposes perfect order and law ; and perfect law implies absolute beauty, Goodness and Grace. The heart instinctively resents the idea that anything is accidental, unpurposed ; the causeless is one with the idle, the useless, the vain. We resent the idea that this mysterious and wonderful whole of things is the product of chance. And, therefore, through the power of intuition, of feeling, conjecture, hope, trust, through the sense of dependence, through the sense of mystery, we break through the confines of knowledge and burst into the Infinite.

Another of the great conceptions which Religion always entertains, is the conception of individual perfectness. A strange thing to believe, that individual men can become perfect ! And yet, there is no sacred book in any language, that does not demand this. Jesus says, “ Be ye perfect even as your Father in Heaven is perfect.” An absolute perfection, an Ideal beyond our utmost dreams ! and yet we



never have seen a perfect man! There never has been a perfect example of human nature! The dream has always distanced the dreamer. Whence the dream? Some man, some chosen man of earth, some highly gifted person, deeply sensitive saint or seer, has felt and declared that the capacity of the moral and spiritual nature was infinite. His understanding, he confessed, was limited, his intellect had its bounds, but was there end to the heart's capacity for loving,—end to the conscience's power of holding to Truth and Justice,—end to the reach and attainment of aspiration in the Soul? None. Because the great spirit said that, gave it out as a truth for all, men have believed it, and in their inmost soul have felt that they could become all that these dreamed. Chosen persons have declared, and not only declared, but shown their capacity for better things, always craving with an incessant hunger and thirst for improvement in culture, knowledge, excellence, wealth of nature; like the voracious Alexander, who sighed because there were no more worlds to conquer; like the artist who felt that it was time for him to die because he had painted a picture that satisfied him; like the sculptor who broke statue after statue in pieces, because he could not shape in stone his Ideal. This restlessness of the noble mind, this stretching forward of the earnest spirit, seems to be something like an

inborn principle, an organic law of the moral nature. The humblest assume it, the imperfect take it for granted, and, resting themselves on it as a basis, entertain belief in a growing virtue, an increasing glory, rising to perfection in their own individual nature. Some great person has the power to be utterly unselfish, to put aside on occasion all considerations of private comfort, ease, or wealth, that another may have the satisfaction which he covets and would intensely enjoy. This is also an evident fact, and being a fact, is of such tremendous significance as seems to justify the hope of perfect bloom for each individual spirit. "Great men," says Emerson, "shall not impoverish, but enrich us. Great men—the age goes on their credit; but all the rest, when their wires are continued and not cut, can do as signal things, and in new parts of nature. There is not a person here present, to whom omens that should astonish, have not predicted his future, have not uncovered his past."

Finally, there is the ancient conception of a hereafter, an immortal existence, of action, satisfaction, enjoyment, blessedness for each human spirit. That conception is born of faith. We do not know it by observation; we cannot prove it by facts; outside of spiritualism nobody claims to have direct knowledge of it, and all spiritualists are not certain; yet



we sigh for it, and almost in spite of ourselves expect it. The dream of it, the hope of it, the dim rich anticipation of it, how it flutters in the unsatisfied heart! How it possesses, all but unconsciously, the souls of men! Yet what ground is there for this restless and insatiable desire that comes in our best moments after felicity, this faith in the organic vitality of affection, this confidence in the heart's prophecy of recompense, of joyousness and delight when the storm and weariness of life shall be over; this belief in the utter goodness that will bring to a perfect finish everything that has been made? Faith, nothing else; but a faith how beautiful, sustaining, comforting, enticing, how enchanting and inspiring!

Is it said that these are intangible and visionary objects? that we should abandon all such and put faith in visible things, in men and qualities that we know about, in honesty, integrity, purity, truthfulness, nobleness of character? By all means, I reply. But these are the hardest things in the world to have faith in. To believe,—in a world like this of to-day,—to believe that honesty, pure, simple, unadorned honesty is the best policy, now, here, and in every department of life, requires an exalted faith in pure principles. Who knows that? Who can prove it? What demonstration is there? To believe that

*faith in principle*

truth is ever wisest and safest, that the right thing is the prudent thing, to *believe* this, not to say that you believe it, requires an exercise of faith such as only the greatest minds are capable of; the man who has faith enough for this might easily have faith in a Creator that shall justify his expectation.

Faith is the ground of enthusiasm. In every age moral enthusiasm is due to faith, and faith is generated in moral enthusiasm. The strong workers, the wise prophets, the far-seeing reformers, the outspoken teachers, the bold achievers in every department, have been men of faith. They believe in inviolable laws. They have trust in recognized principles. Life would be a poor, barren thing, did we have to walk over highways that have been trodden hard by multitudinous feet, to handle only what can be seen, touched and tasted, were we permitted to see no further than our hand can reach. There are men, doubtless, who lead noble, brave, uplifted and generous lives without the help of the imagination, and with no vision of an ideal world; but they are few and rare. The most of us need an ideal element to glorify and sweeten the commonplace of existence. Wordsworth says, Men live by admiration, hope and love. If they do, then they who follow the lead of their hearts' best desires and noblest purpose

are the people most likely to get out of existence the richest satisfaction, and to prove the truth of Paul's great saying: "Those who are justified by faith, shall live."

*Boarded - then seen in want  
to. more Res. & worship & prayer  
Return - "Off" of X in Sept. Res  
and especially in opposition*

## INFIDELITY.

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It is customary to open the new year with prayer, the first week being set apart by the "orthodox" churches for concerted application to the Throne of Grace for aid in conducting the more momentous affairs of life. Separate days are appointed for particular interests; a day for families, a day for colleges, a day for Congress and the nation, a day for young men and women, a day for missions at home and abroad, a day for the awakening of religious affections, a day for general peace and good will among the peoples of the civilized globe. The practice cannot be called universal, but it is general, and by those who concern themselves with it, is performed with sincerity and zeal. The week of prayer as it is called, is jestingly, and even contemptuously spoken of among unbelievers who see neither wisdom nor propriety in it, and who regard the time set apart in



efforts to obtain superhuman aid for human enterprises as time wasted if not misspent. But the thoughtful mind finds something touching and impressive in it even though unsympathetic with its own mood. The sight of so many devoutly inclined people turning their hearts heavenward is affecting. The thought of so many people in the attitude of supplication for more wisdom and goodness than they possess is in these days edifying. There can be no harm in associating the gravest interests of society with a divine power, nor in earnestly wishing that a divine power might touch with light and tenderness the agencies by which those interests are advanced. It is not likely that modern men relax their own effort on account of their prayers, withdraw in order to make room for deity, or expect heaven to do for them what they could, if they chose, do for themselves. The belief that men must be co-workers with God, that they who call on God to mend matters must help him to mend them, that no supplications will secure victory to soldiers who take no pains to keep their powder dry, is too familiar to the people of this generation to be disregarded in affairs of such moment as domestic fortune and general education. The success of prayerless people is not so distinguished that the prayerful need be discouraged. The probability is that the act of prayer when performed by

believers deepens the sense of responsibility and quickens the energies of the will. Spiritually regarded, the week of prayer, supposing it to be sincerely employed, has or may have its advantages. If the prayers bring no direct answer in the form of mental direction or moral strength, they may bring an indirect answer in the form of serious purposes and collected resolves, which are worth much.

It is to the philosophical basis of the practice that objection is made. The persuasion gains ground that this basis is fundamentally insecure and must endanger any superstructure of usage that is built upon it. The observance of the week of prayer proceeds on the assumption that there is a Being, called sometimes Christ and sometimes God, who hears, entertains and answers prayers; and this belief implies that his favors are granted on condition of the prayer; that but for the prayer they would be withheld; that the divine goodness is not absolute but relative; not inevitable but conditioned; not universal, but partial; not ingrained in the constitution of the world, but incidental and external; that there are regions where the perfect mind is inactive, *is not*, in other words, and that the dwellers in those regions are outside of the celestial favor. The doctrine and practice of prayer as entertained by the multitude seems to come to this. The consolation derived from

the thought that God helps the believers who pray, is balanced by the disheartening feeling that God does not help the unbelieving who pray not; a forlorn consideration that takes the life out of this article in the Christian's faith.

Two classes of people, on this ground, dissent from the doctrine and abstain from the usage of prayer. Both entertain the same philosophical objections; both agree essentially in their conception of providence, and the laws of human activity. They differ in the spirit in which this conception is held, and in their attitude of feeling towards the professors of the popular view. But here their difference is so great that it divides them into distinct and even hostile schools.

The first class takes the accepted belief literally, puts the hardest construction on it, and assails it as a palpable form of superstition. To believe there is a Being who hears and answers prayer is, in the view of these objectors, absurd. That cannot be; it is irrational, incredible, inconceivable. The practice of prayer is idle, and harmful too, inasmuch as it leads men to expect from an unseen Being what they should demand of themselves, and allows them to squander in aimless and fruitless emotion vitality that should be manifest in determination and deed. We are providences to ourselves, say these stiff and sturdy



dissenters "Our valors are our best gods." The world is what we make it, and life is what we make it. We are endowed with faculties that we may use them, and on our use of them depends our welfare. There is no more thought than our minds entertain, no more purpose than our hearts cherish. We must make the best of things as they are, human nature included. What God may be is no concern of ours. We cannot tell whether there be any God, and that being so it is the part of wise men to clear their minds of all thoughts about him and his providence, to turn their backs on spirits, good or evil, to desist from all practices of idolatry and necromancy, and go about their business with such courage as they have. So these people fasten down the sky-lights, avoid the temples, put their bibles on an upper shelf, button their coats, put on their hats, say that for them work is worship, and are satisfied to lead stout, protesting, defiant, and unpoetic lives; rather joyless perhaps, but not destitute of solid satisfaction.

The second class are more imaginative. They are disposed to construe popular beliefs poetically, and to see the fair side of practices they cannot themselves engage in. To them, prayer, as literally understood, petition addressed to a personal, listening and responding deity, is unphilosophical and



irrational. They believe in no such deity. Their belief is in universal and unchangeable law; of the nature of the Supreme Mind, of the ways of Providence, they confess themselves profoundly ignorant. The light of nature is all they claim, and the light of nature is human reason informed by knowledge. They have no doubt that the improvement of society in all its departments and relations, depends on the human beings who compose it, and on them alone; that the hope of man lies in education, culture, training of the intellectual and moral powers, clear perception of what is required, and enlightened firm purpose to do it. They therefore do not pray. But they aspire, they look upward, they refresh their minds by the contemplation of serene ideas, they warm their hearts by associations with noble and tender sentiments. They keep the skylight clean and open; they admire the aspect of the starry heavens, for, though they imagine no deities there, no angels, no shining immortal shapes, they are impressed by the silence and calmness, the order and gracious obedience of the starry hosts. Gazing into the unfathomable depths of space, watching the lights that gleam and fade on the firmament, the tender colors of morning and evening, the appearance and disappearance of constellations, that come and go

Unaffrighted by the silence round them,  
 Undistracted by the sights they see ;

a gentle awe settles upon ; them a humble dignity is imparted to their minds ; passion is quieted, complaint is hushed, discontent is removed, fretfulness is soothed away, existence is invested with a species of grandeur ; an impression of the infinite, the eternal, the absolute is made that expands and exalts their souls. In the tranquillity that ensues, the mind is content to ask no question, the heart accepts an immeasurable hope in place of a definite promise, the soul satisfied that all is well, cannot desire that anything should be better.

This difference on the question of prayer marks a characteristic difference in these two classes throughout. Both are what is technically called "infidel" that is, both discard revelation, whether through church, creed, or bible ; both fall back on nature for knowledge of divine as well as human things, both rely on reason, both consult science, both confine themselves to the sphere of experience. But in every other respect they differ widely. I will designate them as the old and the new school of infidelity, and will endeavor so to define them that no doubt may be left in your minds in regard to their character and their relative worth.

x 1. The first thing that attracts attention in the older school of infidelity is the stress it lays on common sense as furnishing a rule of guidance. Common sense is its oracle, occupying the place that revelation holds in the "evangelical" scheme. Common sense it regards as reason acting reasonably. Whatever is not according to common sense is foolish; whatever shrinks from the application of common sense is visionary and deceptive. The observances of religion, prayer, praise, adoration, are not according to common sense, and are, therefore, useless. The sentiments of religion, faith, hope, trust, are not according to common sense, and are to be discountenanced; the ideas of religion, God, Providence, Immortality, are not acceptable to common sense, and must, therefore, be swept from the mind. By this rule the universe is translated into very simple prose. For very much that gives value and sweetness to our daily existence eludes the touch of common sense. All the works of the imagination do, poetry does, and art, architecture does and music. Common sense gives no account of moral heroism and enthusiasm, the passion for principles, the devotion to ideas, the scholar's absorption in his books, the astronomer's love for his science, the explorer's joy in his discovery, the reformer's consecration to his dream, the saint's rapture in his



vision, the friend's disinterested loyalty, the lover's self-denying faithfulness; the numberless delicious and glorious but unpractical and uneconomical affections, that cost time and money and return no dividends, turn no mill wheel and grind no corn, decline to be estimated by common sense. Ideas will not consent to be measured by the yard stick, nor will sentiments get into the scales along with brass weights. Common sense is practical, believes in matter and use and in making ends meet. It does not meddle with the absolute, but takes things at their word, in homely English speech, trusts the senses, and clings to the objects of sense as being most in correspondence with usual occasions, the most apt and certain, the best vouchers for the integrity of the world. It cannot see spirit, and therefore will not accredit it. It never visited the other world, never saw anybody who had, and therefore rejects the doctrine of a future life. This reliance on common sense gives to the school of opinion I am describing a flat, thin, monotonous character which makes it unattractive to all but a few minds.

2. A second peculiarity of this school is its disregard of the studies in historical religions that have made our generation so illustrious. The great scholars in this department, whose names are familiar to all cultivated people, have lived and

wrought since the school we speak of, the school of Voltaire and Paine, was founded. Recent researches have taught us the affinities and sympathies of religions; have shown us how religions were born and how developed; have enabled us to estimate their worth, to measure their influence, to look at their positive aspects, and do justice to the service they have rendered to the human race. To us it is a commonplace that every form of religion has been and is adapted to the people entertaining it, and is intimately connected with their progress in civilization. This the old school of infidelity does not perceive; and failing to perceive it, makes the mistake of judging religions by the standard of culture or of knowledge that obtains to-day. It is as if one were to judge a picture by Ghirlandajo or Fra Angelico as if it had been painted for the New York market. Religions, we have come to learn, are expressions of human feeling under certain conditions, efforts of the human mind to attain distinct conceptions of an ideal world; products of adoration, faith and worship; to take them out of their surroundings, put them under the microscope, and insist that they shall give an intelligible account of themselves in a lecture room or counting house, is unfair. The result of such a process is condemnation, not of the religion under question, but of the questioner. Only one

who is quite ignorant of the conditions of the inquiry would think of making it.

3. In consequence of this fatal misapprehension, the old school of infidelity was furiously polemical. It dealt and deals in unqualified denials. It assails, and assails, and assails, and has no misgiving about the justice or the policy of assault. Taking words in their obvious meaning, and doctrines in their superficial sense, it finds it easy and tempting work to prove them nonsense. To call one and three identical or equivalent is absurd; therefore the Trinity is a contradiction in terms. The proposition that God and man are one is unintelligible; therefore the deity of Christ is gibberish. Religion and superstition are taken to be synonymous terms, and as superstition is a name for whatever is insane, silly, barbarous and demoralizing, the blows are rained upon religion thick and heavy. Religion is another name for bondage, and as bondage is a hateful thing, religion is detested as an enemy of mankind. That superstition is an abominable thing, and that there is a great deal of it, nobody doubts, and good servants of man are they who fight against it; that intellectual and spiritual bondage is a dreadful thing is beyond all question, and praise belongs to the earnest men who would emancipate their fellows from thralldom; but neither superstition nor bondage is synonymous



or identical with religion, and to confound things so very different is to make a mistake that goes far to neutralize the good effects of the reformer. Blows that hit the wrong person are not usually justified by their directness or their force. The fanatical priest who bade his partisans fire on a crowd, and in reply to the captain's hesitation to shoot the believers along with the misbelievers, shouted, "shoot all; the believers will all the more quickly go to heaven," won credit for intrepidity among fanatics like himself but lost esteem with lovers of justice.

The old school of infidelity had the merit of frankness and courage. It was plain spoken when plain speaking was counted no virtue, and brave against odds. It hated equivocation; it despised vagueness, it would have no false refuges. These are its merits, and they are great ones. But it is literal, undiscerning, narrow, intolerant. It has done good work; it has good work yet to do; but its work is among the uncultured and uneducated, who must be taken as they are, and prepared, by sharp and severe treatment for the enjoyment of nobler intellectual liberty.

The new school of infidelity occupies very different ground. It is still, in the estimation of Christian believers, infidelity, for it has no belief in supernatural revelations or in the systems that claim to have proceeded from them. Its faith is in reason

pure and simple; its avowal of this faith is sincere and uncompromising; its thought is outspoken, its speech is as clear as the circumstances permit. But it accepts the whole reason, not a part of it only, including imagination and sentiment, as well as understanding, and in its language it avails itself of the poetic diction which is alone suited to the treatment of poetic themes. It stands outside of the creeds, allows no identification of itself with any class of orthodox believers, lets it be well understood that it cannot be classified with any of the sects; but it holds this position with the humility of the seeker, as well as the frankness of the thinker; and while firm in its conviction of principles, will not be betrayed into the dogmatism of which the sects have given such lamentable exhibition. Infallibility is for those who dare to speak in the name of God, not for those who can only speak in the name of reason. These latter may be earnest; they must be clearly convinced; but they cannot be arrogant or assuming. Let me note one or two characteristic features of the new infidelity, as contrasted with the old.

I. It is religious—By this I do not mean that it professes a religious creed, that it builds churches, ordains preachers, consecrates priests, institutes rites and ceremonies, repeats litanies, or performs



any of the offices usually called religious. Quite possibly it neglects these systematically and on principle. What I mean is this: that it cultivates reverence for things and persons universally esteemed great and good, preserves the association with sentiments of worship, cherishes the thought of unseen powers and excellencies, looks up to unattained heights of virtue, sends out hope beyond the limits of present existence, keeps alive the mental communication with the great faiths of mankind, aspires, kneels, adores. The infidels of this type have no thought of abolishing religion when they put aside as obsolete and useless certain forms and expressions of it. They do not imagine that they cease to be religious by ceasing to be called Christian, Mussulman, or Jew. It never occurs to them that rejecting any or all definitions of God, they are released from all intellectual relations with the infinite mind; that rejecting the Christ, they have disposed of the claims of Jesus on the loving respect of mankind; that putting aside the accepted theories of immortality they are entitled to dismiss the whole question of the hereafter as the idle speculation of vacant hearts; that doubting the special inspiration of the bible, they are at liberty to disparage the Hebrew or other scriptures as collections of foolish traditions and fables; that discrediting the authority of estab-

lished churches, they may pronounce churches everywhere to be hot-beds of superstition and nurseries of tyranny. Religion to them is a much greater thing than the forms of religion, a thing that will become mightier and more beautiful as those forms disappear and give place to grander ones; and they are continually hoping to see the grander ones appear; they regard as permanent elements of human nature the idea of something infinite, eternal and absolute, the hunger after righteousness, the passion for truth, the dream of perfection, the vision of ideal states, in which religion has its origin, and from which it derives its charms. Admiration, faith and love are properties of the soul which are entitled to recognition and satisfaction. These qualities are, as far as they see, constituent portions of the finest natures. However originating, there they are, and while they endure the world of ideal glory endures also to which they refer. Religion endures; the religious sentiments endure; the virtues and graces of religion endure; the setting of the sun of faith reveals the night heavens of mystery where a million of suns revolve.

This is a point to be insisted on. Infidelity is unbelief in some particular system of faith. But religion is more than all such systems. It is the substance from which all systems originally pro-

ceeded. Unbelief in these may imply the deeper belief in this pure primeval element, and so in proportion to his infidelity may be the infidel's devoutness.

II. Again, as might be inferred from what has just been said, the new infidelity is positive and constructive, not destructive or negative. Not that the work of destruction is finished; it is not by any means, and will not be for many generations to come. But it remains to be done for a class that the new infidelity does not address. For the intelligent classes, the thinking classes, whether educated or uneducated it is to a considerable degree accomplished. It is hardly worth while to spend time and strength in battering down the theological system of Christendom. The leaders of opinion have dismissed it. The vast multitude of the people have abandoned it from indifference or incredulity. The wealth and fashion and conservative tradition of society still maintain it as an instituted thing; but the live mind of the age has lost interest in it. What the time needs is reconstruction, new interpretations, new outlooks, new shapes of veneration, new directions of desire, new visions of the everlasting, new vistas of futurity, new sympathies and associations; and these the new infidelity will be called on to furnish. The old infidelity cannot, for it disbelieves in all re-



ligion and looks forward to its ultimate decease. The established orthodoxy cannot, for it clings to the existing order of things being persuaded that all departure from that is a wandering off into nothingness and destruction. The new infidelity being free to seek better forms and earnest in seeking them, may be counted on to build temples, if not more stately, at least more commodious and vast. Taking as its rock of ages knowledge, the solid knowledge which science and philosophy supply; knowledge painfully discovered, carefully selected, wisely classified, it will give sentiment free commission to erect thereon structures that shall satisfy the needs of the soul, and will there give inspiration to its desire and scope for its anticipation. That it has not yet done this in any conspicuous degree is no sign that it will not attempt it, and will not accomplish it in due time; for its aim is direct, and its purpose high. It does look forward and upward, not downward and behind, and it cannot be defeated in its endeavor.

III. That it may perform this work of construction with steady success it adopts a method of which the old infidelity knows nothing. This was indicated when I said that the new infidelity made its appeal to reason and the whole reason, to the critical faculty, the understanding, the searching, analytical faculty, but also to the combining faculty, the imagina-

tion, sentiment, the moral intuition; common sense it reckons of the least importance; imagination it reckons of the greatest. The task of investigating truth is one that makes demand on all the rational powers. In these times of ours fresh powers are brought to bear on the work which half a century ago were unrevealed—namely, science and history. Of special significance is history, the history of human beliefs. Oceans of light come from this quarter. The disclosures made by history alone have done as much as all other agencies to modify opinion, to abolish prejudice, overcome antipathies, promote kindness of feeling among hostile beliefs, and open the way to the ancient recesses of faith. The old infidelity, by the narrow rigidity of its method, cuts itself off from these fine sources. The new infidelity, by availing itself of them, prepares to enter on a promising career. The old infidelity, acting on the principle that seeing is believing, is confined within the limits of demonstrable truths. The new infidelity, adopting the other maxim that seeing is knowing but that believing is a very different thing from knowing, has open to it all the possibility of discovery. The former may indefinitely enlarge its sphere but it has only one sphere; the latter has many spheres, each one capable of indefinite expansion.

The two schools of infidelity stand thus related

one to the other. The new school is the extension, the full logical development of the old one. The latter is infidelity in a state of arrested progress. The latter has rendered service to humanity, but in the former there is hope.

Infidelity is a great word, and describes a great thing. It has been applied to holders of all opinions and the most diverse; to the primitive Christians, to the Pauline Christians, to the Jews of the middle age, to the Protestants of the 12th and 13th centuries, to unitarians, to the French atheists, to the English deists, to the New England transcendentalists, to the school of Paine and the opposite school of Parker. It is used to describe the opinions of the minority, the suspected and hated few.

It is another name for fidelity—fidelity to principles that are not recognized. In every generation, it has meant fidelity; that has been asserting; that built on affirmations that grew more grand as the way of progress opened. The fidelity has not been the same as to every matter of detail, but to certain central ideas it has been true.

1. Infidelity has been fidelity to conviction, to the mind's moral conviction of truth. I do not mean to insinuate that loyalty to conviction is confined to unbelievers, or is more frequent among unbelievers than among believers. Such an insinuation would



be no more ungenerous than unjust. The vast majority of believers are so on conviction, or on what they suppose to be conviction, and on occasion would attest their conviction by making any sacrifice it required. But the conviction that one shares with the multitude, and is popular, so long as it is so scarcely deserves to be called conviction. It lacks edge and point, is undefined, is without the association with moral earnestness that gives weight. Opinions rarely become convictions until they become unpopular. To be in a minority, particularly in an abused or disliked minority forces opinion into definite shape, drives it in upon the mind, condenses it as it were, compels the man who entertains it to calculate its worth to himself and to society. The conviction thus fashioned and hardened may become narrow, intense, fanatical. The moral elements associated with it may be mingled with personal passion, pride, stubbornness and a spirit of defiance. In some cases the conviction, or what seems the conviction, may itself be but another name for opinionativeness, a disagreeable and desperate quality. Still the moral element in the great multitude of cases, is there, and it gives to opinion the edge and temper that are available for the advancement of truth. Convictions are very uncomfortable things for those that hold them and for those that do not; but they seem to be

indispensable to success in the conflict of ideas. Cannon balls are made of iron, not of wool, and weapons of steel, not of bulrush. Infidelity cannot afford to be loose-jointed, it must show a firm front, be enduring and brave; and such it has ever been. Martyrs and confessors have been made of this stuff; champions and reformers have borne its insignia. Such as these have been counted among unbelievers by the popular vote. While thus esteemed, while in a suspected and maligned minority, their thoughts were clear, their purposes sharp; on becoming in their turn a majority, their beliefs lost their pith, convictions degenerated into opinions, opinions sunk into traditions, the swords went to the junk shop and were sold for old iron. Infidelity is thus the perpetual renewer of faithfulness.

2. Infidelity, so history informs us, has been fidelity to humanity. To be reckoned infidel, to be cast out of the pale and held to be unworthy of fellowship with believers, has the effect to brace the individual will, to strengthen self respect, to create sympathy with others who are in the minority, to draw the outcast and suffering together in bonds of amity, to reconcile classes and conditions. The early Christians amazed the pagans by their love towards one another, a love nurtured by mutual sorrows and common deprivations. They were com-



pelled to love one another, or to be alone and disconsolate. The persecuted are faithful to the persecuted. As people take their turn at persecuting and being persecuted, they take their turn in being gentle, pitiful, and humane. Their faith when it is most generous is "The fidelity of fellow wanderers in a desert place, who share the same dire thirst and therefore share the scanty water." Ceasing to be wanderers, they cease to be fellows.

3. That infidelity is fidelity to liberty is too clear to be said. Its very attitude is a perpetual assertion of liberty. Its stand with a minority is an assertion of its right so to stand. Freedom to think, speak, write and publish, goes with infidelity wherever it goes. The "infidel" of whatever belief, is a champion of liberty. Having new doctrines to promulgate, new views to present, new arguments and interpretations to urge, he demands for himself and for others that the human mind shall be emancipated. And thus it has befallen that rigid Calvinists, believing in total depravity, when pushed into the position of infidels, have been illogical champions of individual liberty and of popular rights.

Our modern liberties have been won piece by piece by "infidels," who in fighting for their own hand were fighting for their race. The succession of infidelity maintains the succession of independence.

It is hardly too much to say, that "infidelity" holds in its bosom the constructive forces of society. It would do so, in any case, whatever might be its speculative opinions, because it favors liberty, widens fellowship, cherishes hopes for man. But when, in addition to this, it is open, large, generous, hospitable to knowledge, hearty in anticipation, elastic and joyous in faith, kindly and sweet in spirit, what may not be expected from it? Let its adherents entertain it as a affirmation, not as a denial, as a faith, not as a renunciation of faith, as a renovating, not as a destructive force, as a power to open the gates of the future, not as a power commissioned to dig the grave of the past; let them avow it, boast of it, rejoice in it, hold it forth, not as a challenge, but as a gift, take it confidingly to the doubting and despairing, and show by their own trust in it that they think it worth commending, and the prejudice against it will wear away. The stone which the builders rejected will become the head of the corner.



# RELIGION AND CHILDHOOD.

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One of our serious problems is to determine the place that Religion should hold in the instruction of the young—the relation of Religion to Childhood. To the believers in the old system the problem presents no difficulties, for both Religion and Childhood are so completely reduced to theory, so nicely fitted into the same system of thought, that in passing from considerations of one to considerations of the other, the mind is conscious of no effort. But with believers in the new faith, neither Religion nor Childhood is definitely outlined, and the passage from one to the other is abrupt and forced.

After a recent revival movement, in the neighborhood, it was stated that of the conversions made, the greater part were of children under fifteen years of age. Such a fact, in the judgment of many, condemned the revival as showing that it was power-

less to meet adults of mature faculties and ripe experience, and suited only to excite the young, in whom fancy took the place of thought, whose judgment had not been ripened, and with whom experience was a thing which neither time nor circumstance had contributed to form. A revival of Religion that makes no impression on the leading minds of a community and seems to exert little, if any, influence on the managers of the active concerns of society, but reckons it a merit to seize on the sensitive emotions of children, is, in the judgment of many thoughtful people, self-convicted of unreasonableness and inefficiency.

The objections to this procedure are grave. In the first place, it is urged, the children cannot, from the nature of the case, in the least understand the value of the experiences that are wrought within them. Neither the ideas nor the emotions consequent on the ideas are intelligible to them, or can be made intelligible. They are literally victims of an operation, in which they cannot take an active share, the motive and purpose of which must alike be hidden. Advantage is taken of their impressibility, the quickness of their feelings, the liveliness of their fancy, their unguarded excitability and openness to impression, to commit them to expressions of faith and love, the meaning whereof is as far from their comprehension,

as the formulas of astronomy can be. They understand no more the character of the pledges they assume or the associations they form, than they do of the obligations of angels, or the connections of the planets. Their attitude is entirely passive, and passive in that helpless and pathetic way which pleads mutely for respect and forbearance. Indeed, when the matter is regarded by this light, an imposition of the kind thus practised on them appears little short of an outrage, against which considerate and good people should protest.

Besides this liberty taken with their nature as it is, the act of forestalling young minds in their after growth, determining so far as such a thing is practicable, their future intellectual and moral states, so that, on reaching maturity, they shall find themselves preoccupied by certain fixed ideas and sentiments, predestinated as it were, to certain beliefs from which they can break away only with severe pain if they break away at all, is to the last degree reprehensible. Have we a right to anticipate thus the intellectual convictions of rational creatures? Have we a right to subject the will to the thralldom of opinions that, if not repudiated later, ought to be, for the moral sanity of the man or woman? Nor yet is this all or worst. The impressions thus made in Childhood become wrought into the texture and

substance of the mind, and endure through all after culture and experience. They may be forgotten, apparently overgrown by other beliefs, buried to all appearance beneath other systems of faith and philosophy—and then, when the person has become old and weak, the spectres will spring out on him, will glare and menace at his bed side, will fill his chamber with gloom, and people with terrors the hereafter which hope had for years suffused with sunshine. Incidents of this kind occur almost daily, and they constitute a terrible arraignment of the old system.

The “Evangelist’s” reply to objections like these, it is easy to conjecture. He will say that in the education of children many things must be taught and insisted on which they cannot understand, moral sentiments particularly; that instruction in all that pertains to the first principles of knowledge must be given on authority. Not parents alone, but teachers of every degree proceed on the assumption, the reasonable, inevitable assumption, that the young mind must be formed, the childish will moulded, the natural character shaped, according to accepted and established rules; that to inculcate only what could be understood would be fatal to mental training; that the religious teacher, preacher, minister, simply pursues the course that in the secular teacher is commended.

In regard to forestalling the future action of the mind, that is precisely what the "Evangelist" wishes to do; and success in doing it is counted by him a glory, not a shame. He wishes to anticipate beliefs, to prevent growth, as it is called, to cut off the chances of alteration, and make other conclusions impossible. In his opinion, the salvation of the soul from everlasting misery depends on fidelity to the beliefs he inculcates, and the earlier those beliefs are implanted the better. If they can be so deeply impressed on the young mind that no after thought or study, no acquaintance with men or books, no intellectual associations or convulsions will obliterate or bury them, that is the consummation most devoutly to be wished.

From the orthodox point of view this argument is unanswerable. For the orthodox believer starts with the assumption that his truth is as impregnable as the axioms of mathematics, nay, more so, for the mathematics are a human science, while his truth is the infallible communication of the divine mind. The mathematics are expanded and enlarged by new calculations and applications; but the faith "once delivered to the Saints" is "the same yesterday, to-day and forever." No teacher claims such authority as he lays title to; for his sentiments have the final authority that belongs to the precepts of the moral law.



This system, he contends, is of heavenly origin, constructed by the infinite mind and imparted by special revelation, to be received by all intelligences, the most simple and the most exalted, with entire submission. To receive it, all must become as little children, divesting themselves of the prejudices resulting from culture and the habits born of experience. Of other teaching, even the most rigidly scientific, the most universally accepted as authoritative in morals, it may be said that it is still open to correction, expansion, and more or less radical change ; but of this, unchangeableness is the one distinguishing quality. It is fixed as the eternal ; is susceptible of no amendment or alteration, but remains essentially unmodified from age to age.

Hence, in the orthodox Sunday School, the teacher merely takes pains to communicate the doctrines of the creed, in such a way as to fasten them upon the child's mind. The instruction is given after the manner of routine. The pupils commit beliefs to memory, repeat them, rehearse them till the catechism is as familiar as the multiplication table. By the consideration that the classes, by and by, when they grow older, may be moved to form new beliefs more in accordance with facts they observe or learn, and that in doing so they may suffer terribly from the effort to wrench their intellects out of the

grooves made for them before they learned to think, the evangelists are unaffected. The more suffering of this kind in their judgment, the better. It will, perhaps, deter them from breaking away ; if it does not, it will compel them to weigh their new opinions well before accepting them, and will impart to them when reached a degree of earnestness they would lack if entertained on easier terms. The association of beliefs with sorrow brings them near the heart. The opinions we have suffered for are ever the most dear. The dissenters who have torn themselves away from their old faith may thank their early instructors for the deep-hearted earnestness with which their new faith is held.

As to the danger of running the minds of generations in a cast-iron mould, it cannot, fortunately, be reckoned serious. Doctrines are not held in precisely the same verbal form through a long course of generations ; they are modified by the progress of thought in other directions, and by the insensible changes that pass over the surface of the human mind. The most essential truths become altered by time, as they adapt themselves to the moods of advancing men. The expressions of the Westminster Catechism are not repeated now even in schools where once they were received as the very language of the Holy Ghost. The stiffest superintendents will ease the phraseology here and there.

For the rest, it is a law of rational progress that each generation shall impart to the next its convictions, such as they are; even when frankly recognized as not final, they are inculcated as being the best there are, and with earnestness proportioned to the amount of mind vested in them. They are taught as being true, taught as knowledge, for only as so taught do they add to the contents of the mind and the consistency of moral growth.

It is thus easy enough for the convinced believer to face the question: How much religion shall I impart to childhood, and how shall I impart it? He answers unhesitatingly, "All the religion I can, and in the most direct, literal manner."

To the convinced unbeliever the problem is equally simple. To him religion is but another name for superstition, and must be kept as far from the child's mind as possible; religious beliefs and religious sentiments in his judgment do but confuse and distract the minds of men and women, wasting time, disturbing quiet, embarrassing feeling, misleading purpose—interfering in fact with the healthy processes of intellectual life; it would be a great advantage therefore if children could be brought up in absolute ignorance of them, never attending church, chapel or Sunday school, never lisping a prayer, never reading the Bible, never singing a hymn, never hearing

the word "God," never instructed in the history or character of Jesus, never speaking of providence, or the hereafter. In this way John Stuart Mill grew up as one who never had a religious belief; who was from the beginning in a negative state with regard to it; who looked upon the modern exactly as he did upon the ancient religion, as something which in no way concerned him. It is not easy to bring up a child in this way, but the way is simple, and people who believe it the true way are commonly resolute people, who spare no pains to carry out their purpose. By precept and example, by warning and prohibition, by utter disregard of religion at home, and by frequently expressed contempt for religion abroad, they may succeed in keeping the minds of their children vacant of ideas on the subject.

But apart from the reasonableness or unreasonableness of the opinions themselves, the rational objections to this course are nearly as grave as to the other. The culture of the higher moral sentiments, and especially of what are called the spiritual qualities, reverence, aspiration, hope, humility, is considered important in a complete education, and the association of these qualities with religious faith of some kind is so close that without it, it is difficult to foster them at all. Even the imagination, that primary faculty of the reason, is largely dependent for

its nurture on the materials that religion supplies. To cut off religion entirely is to endanger the vitality of a portion of the intellectual powers, and to risk at least the reduction of the mental life to a prosaic, commonplace and blank level. In our modern world the disposition towards this needs no encouragement. From their earliest years, children are accustomed to the manners and thoughts of a world regulated on principles of common sense, and if no special effort is made, the horizon line of existence rarely rises above the dead plain of a limitless wilderness.

The social nature of childhood is not to be neglected, either, and this is in great measure associated with religion. Children are brought together most sweetly on religious occasions, at the Christmas holidays, in Sunday schools, by the summer parties which take them with their teachers into the fields. The consistent atheist, "infidel," or irreligionist, must keep his children away from such occasions, on the ground that their spirit, and to a certain degree their form, is religious, and in so doing he deprives them of sunlight in winter, and of an added joy in summer,

Nor is this all; the anti-religionist, in forestalling the development of the child's mind, is guilty of the same outrage that he charges upon the evangelist. He assumes that religion is a nuisance as arbitrarily

as the other assumes that it is a blessing ; a hindrance, as absolutely as the other maintains that it is a necessary help. He, too, would commit the mind of the child, in advance of its understanding, to beliefs, or rather to unbeliefs, that it may wish presently to outgrow and put aside. His atheism is a superstition ; his "infidelity" is a tyranny—a superstition of a rather unlovely kind ; a tyranny that may gall even more than the one he detests.

For in attempting to eradicate religious ideas from the child's mind, he must make direct war against the persuasions of the community in which he lives. He must be continually engaged in the ungracious task of *unteaching*, a negative task, made up largely of contradiction and denial. At school the child meets with opinions that are discarded at home, and when at home explanation is asked, the temptation to flout them instead of explaining them is too great to be resisted by any but finely toned minds. The answers given to questions about Jesus, or bible, are more likely to be characterized by emphasis than by wisdom, and the impression made will be surly and distorted in proportion as it is distinct. Justice is seldom done to the beliefs, or to the spirit in which they are entertained. And the young minds grow up not only fixed, but fixed in a disagreeable attitude—captious, irritable and snarling.



It is easy to say that the culture of the finest human qualities is not dependent on religious beliefs; that the imagination has plenty of room for exercise in the wide fields of secular poetry; that there are other opportunities for the development and enjoyment of the social affections than those that religion furnishes. It is easier to say this than to make the saying good. It is quite possible that a full, sound, complete and beautiful expansion of the intellectual, social and moral nature may be secured without religious belief of any kind; but to secure it there must be a remarkable sense of its value, and an unusual feeling of its desirableness; such a sense and feeling as is not possessed by people in general, and certainly is not characteristic of people avowedly irreligious. The disposition that appreciates the advantage and beauty of the higher culture, leads naturally to religious faith. Poetical atheists are few. Social atheists are not numerous. Atheists who are idealists in thought or feeling are very rare. Mr. Mill puts on record his own remarkable experience under this method, and the account he gives of its tendency and result is not cheerful. The impression left on the reader's mind is rather melancholy. The life was joyless from the want of the poetic or ideal element, as is evident from the description itself, and from the fact that when that ele-

ment came to him in later years through another agency, his existence was gladdened by a softer and sweeter feeling. Yet Mill's father, though an austere man, was, in point of intellect, and culture, and wide human interest, a very extraordinary one. He gave his son everything but this; everything that might make amends for the absence of what most natures so much rely on. An utterly irreligious or unreligious education will, under usual circumstances, be a dry and barren one. Poetic natures may make it otherwise, but none but poetic natures will or can.

To the unreligious, however, as well as to the especially and conventionally religious, the problem I proposed in beginning my discourse presents no peculiar difficulty. The course is plain; whatever incidental objections may be made to it, are of small consideration. The principle is susceptible of lucid statement, and the believers in the principle will trust that exceptions to it may disappear as it is faithfully pursued.

The problem begins to present difficulties when people find themselves doubting respecting their religious beliefs and wavering in suspense between the old systems and the new; when they find it hard to state their opinions to themselves, and dare not undertake to state them to others. They are relig-

ious, but cannot tell why or how; they have the sentiment without the belief; the feeling, but not the conviction. Religious conceptions float more or less distinctly across their minds, but religious doctrines are repugnant to their reason. The forms of faith have been dropped, but the spirit of it abides. They can hope, but they cannot profess; they can dream, but they cannot dogmatise; they can aspire, but they cannot pray; they can cherish visions, but they cannot entertain opinions. Religious people are unattractive to them; but irreligious people repel them. Their convictions are subject to moods; and the moods perpetually counteract each other. They can pursue no steady course in regard either to their own religious culture or the religious nurture of those dependent on them. They incline first to one side then to the opposite, drift and despond, and commonly end by going idly with the multitude, and casting the reproach, if reproach there be, on the inevitable embarrassments of the transition period.

The perplexities of this state of mind are often serious. How shall they be met? Two or three points are clear. The extremes of religiousness and of unreligiousness must be avoided; there should be no insincerity; and the effort should be made to find means of religious instruction that shall be

open to no objection on the score of too much positiveness. It is certainly not difficult to avoid what is positively unveracious. There is no necessity for inculcating or permitting others to inculcate what is felt to be hollow or untrue. There is no compulsion to send children to a Sunday school where they are taught what the parents do not believe, and must correct if they take any measures at all about it. Attendance on Sunday schools is not obligatory, and often is far from advisable for such as prefer no teaching to bad teaching. The old system depends much, and has for centuries depended much, on the Sunday schools for its support. A Romanist first made the discovery that the enrollment of children in classes was security to the church of the men and women; the Protestants improved on the discovery; and many a heedless parent lends support to an obnoxious system by sending children to the nearest Sunday school to get them out of the way, or because companions and playmates attend. People who dislike the orthodox religion in every form, and reject it from first to last, should be careful how they give it this most material support.

Another point is clear. The reading of the bible should never be inculcated or directly encouraged by people who have no faith in its positive and direct inspiration. The popular belief in respect to

the book should not be even indirectly countenanced. By this it is not meant that the bible should be treated disrespectfully, made the subject of thoughtless criticism and disparaging comment, coarsely or rudely misrepresented. Treatment of this kind is ill-bestowed on a book so many revere, and with so much reason. It is simply meant that no pains should be taken to call particular attention to it, as a book that should be lovingly read, and studied with a sense of duty. No people treat their bible as irreverently as the Christians treat theirs, making a piece of commonplace literature of it, placing it on centre tables in company with cheap novels and books of luxury, taking it up in moments of idle leisure, turning over its leaves without purpose or reflection, conning its pages mechanically, and quoting it for loose and incidental affect.

The popular regard for the bible, as a charmed book, whose presence merely about the person acts as a talisman against wicked spirits, a book that will diffuse an odor of sanctity through ship cabins, and operate as a disinfectant in bar-rooms, is by every means to be discouraged. It is a book to be read understandingly as much as any other: and the whole virtue thereof consists in its distinctly apprehended ideas, and these vagrant minds are in no condition to appropriate.

The bible belongs to the order of sacred writings, and should properly be classed and placed among them, to be read in fitting mood of mind, in serious moments, such as now and then come to thoughtful, but never to thoughtless people, seldom if ever to the young who have not attained the maturity or the dignity to enjoy them. It is a book of high imagination, a book of the soul, sweet to the heart in its hour of trial, good for the conscience in its discipline, ennobling and enriching to the spirit, but unintelligible and unprofitable to the unawakened. There is no greater foolishness than to take it up, as one takes up a poem, or chronicle, or fable. The imagination alone is entitled to deal with it familiarly, and even that may not take unseemly liberties. I would not put the bible into any hands unfitted to receive it, as I would not place my favorite poems, my Homer, or my Shakespeare before unappreciative eyes. In a natural, cultivated community the bible will be placed beyond the easy reach of the young, as it is indeed beyond their judgment and comprehension. Our communities are not natural or cultivated. An artificial and excessive religiosity has destroyed the naturalness and forbidden the culture; and it is quite impossible to give the bible its exact due. On the one side fanaticism perverts its meaning, kills its naturalness, spoils its simplicity,



corrupts and falsifies its spirit; on the other side, hostility to fanaticism reduces its poetry to prose, caricatures its legend, travesties its history, turns its imagery into nonsense, and translates its songs into bombast.

If a knowledge of the bible were necessary, it would be necessary to employ experts to explain it: for no book in the world does less to explain itself. But as a *knowledge* of the bible is not considered necessary by any, and the faith without knowledge that is required by the Christian system is something less than necessary, the judicious parent will be less inclined to encourage its reading than to discourage it, until attraction, which makes any literature living, brings the prepared reader into acquaintance with it. To be ignorant of the bible is no disgrace: to mistake pious ignorance of the bible for knowledge of it, certainly is.

If children find the bible lying on the table and read it, or if they hear it spoken of and ask about it, the only way is to give such explanation as one has, frankly confessing ignorance where the meaning is dark, and venturing modest and generous interpretations where interpretations are called for; remembering that the deepest scholars have spent lives on the volume and have felt their incompetency to understand it, and the purest of heart have watched

and meditated and prayed over it and still been lost in its mystery. There are lovely tales there that children will delight in, tender poems that seize the young fancy, sketches of character and passages of biography that never lose their freshness, legends full of imagination, and parables that touch the simplest heart; but when we would go beyond these, when we attempt to penetrate beneath the superficial sense of these, the man and woman must take up what the child is obliged to lay down.

No plan for commending the bible to children has succeeded. The Swedenborgian method promised well, but its promise was not even kept to the ear; to the hope it was sadly broken. There are few drearier books than two I procured, looking for hints to aid my own teaching, one on the Miracles, another on the Parables, written on the Swedenborgian theory for us, in the Sunday schools of the New Jerusalem. That New Jerusalem had not descended from the clouds, and there was little consolation to children in thinking that it might come down. A more effectual disenchantment of delicious literature it would be difficult to find. The hope that the bible might be made serviceable to children disappeared after a brief examination of those little volumes, and I settled back on my faith that the bible was not and could never be made suitable or intelligible to very young minds.

3 On one other point there need be no doubt, — the point of teaching or encouraging children to pray. This is a matter that admits of no controversy. If one disbelieves in the direct, outward, sensible efficacy of prayer—prayer for bread and meat, for oranges and hobby horses, for childish satisfactions, for childish wants,—to encourage children to pray so is a fraud. For children are in no condition to understand the fine mataphysics by which their wiser elders justify themselves in uplifting their hearts, reckoning on the reflex action of meditation on their own minds, and accepting the spiritual results of contemplation as equivalent to response from the infinite mind. Children are literalists; they take things as they appear on the face. And to encourage them in this is deceit. It may not be worth while to check them if they take up the practice for themselves; for if left to themselves they will soon outgrow it from sheer disappointment at receiving no answers to their petitions; but to urge the formation of the habit certainly is not fair. It is not fair at any rate to teach mechanical importunity, to inculcate the habit of asking unnecessary questions, of imploring for blessings that are not wanted, as if any being, say nothing of the highest, could enjoy the aimless clatter of mendicant boxes held out for pennies from the celestial treasury. It

is time enough, even for believers in prayer to pray when the hour of felt need arrives. But for unbelievers in prayer to teach childish lips to repeat words which, to the best of their belief no ear listens to, is something that very nearly approaches blasphemy. If adults choose to practice such deception on themselves the fault is theirs alone. But in such a matter to trifle with the simplicity of childhood, thus exposing it to a sudden shock when the fraud is discovered, is a guilt that no reasonable person will perpetrate.

So much for the negative aspect of the question ; the duty of protecting children against habits and formal practices that have no ground in reason or faith. The matter here is simple. In its positive aspect it is equally simple when broadly viewed. The ideas and feelings of religion gather about three points. God as the perfect mind and will that expresses its thought in the visible and invisible world ; Man as a being created in the divine image, and capable of participation in the divine nature ; the Hereafter as the fulfilment of man's hope. These conceptions may be stated in many ways without abolishing or materially altering their cardinal meaning ; and the object in stating them in these different ways is to bring them home to so many different classes of minds. The aim of religious teaching is

to present these three conceptions vividly to the mind. Now I venture to say that it is much easier to do this for children than for adults; for the reason that they are more readily apprehended by the imagination than by the understanding. Children are naturally believers, not philosophers or critics, and so are impressible by suggestions when the adult mind requires proofs. An illustration is better than an argument; a picture more effective than a demonstration. An eloquent writer has said: "If when I thought as a child, I had also dared to speak as a child, should I not have said, 'Talk to me no more; I hate the name of God?' Yet not the God that ever lives and loves; not the God whose kiss is in the light, whose gladness on the rising sea, whose voice upon the storm; who shapes the little grass, and hides in the forest, and nestles in the shower; who bends the rainbow, and blanches the snow; for children delight in nature, and from wonder at its beauty easily slide into adoration of its Lord. Not the God who moulded the orbs that Newton weighed, and traced the curves he measured, and blended the colors he untwined; who was on the earth when no man was, and buried the tribes now dug from the mountains and the plains; who thinks at this moment every thought that science shall develop, and *reads* the folded scroll of future history; for chil-

dren delight in knowledge, and will kneel with joy to Him with whom it is at once concentrated and diffused."

Books describing and illustrating the wonders of creation, in plants and animals, on land and sea, and in the depths of air, are within easy reach of all who can read. It is a peculiarity of our age that men of knowledge and talent exert themselves to bring their stores of information within the grasp of the simplest mind. Indeed, to obtain vivid impressions of the order, harmony, beauty and graciousness of the world we turn to the volumes that are prepared for children. For there science repeats the lovely fable of the Infancy; the Magi of the East and West bring from far their gifts to lay them at the feet of the babe in the stable. If parents will open these books of enchantment to their children, their anxieties about teaching the mysteries of God will be relieved. Here is theology not for children only, but for all fresh and living minds.

The second point may be no less happily met,—that human creatures are made in the image of God, and are capable of exhibiting his perfections. Children delight in biography; and in the biography of notable men and women, interesting boys and girls, modern literature abounds. Books of golden deeds, collections of anecdotes illustrating the qualities that children most applaud, courage, fidelity, gene-



rosity, fortitude, valor, kindness, humanity, are purchasable at every bookstore. The newspapers contain examples of heroism taken from the city streets that answer the purpose of showing what human nature may do and become, better than stories from the bible, or from remote and half legendary chronicle. The child is a natural believer in human perfectibility. The skepticism about it belongs to the after period of observation and experience. The man and woman see idols fall one by one till the plain of existence is covered with the mutilated shapes of weather-stained marble; it was the child that set them up, and knelt before them in the flush of life's morning. The dignity of human nature, the excellence of virtue, the nobleness of men, the purity of women, are the most fragile articles in the man's creed; they are the most steadfast and absolute in the child's. The danger is, that it will be lost too soon, not that it will never be gained. Let the parents be anywise faithful, and the children need never doubt.

In regard to the third article, faith in the Hereafter, the same thoughts apply. This too is a faith that wanes rather than waxes as we grow old. It is weakest in middle life, strongest in childhood and in old age. The child finds it easy to believe in heaven and the angels, the happiness of the good, and *the* consolations of the poor and wretched. He knows

nothing of death; but instinctively carries his thought across it, and reconstructs existence on the other side. To him life is all in all; his dead mother has only gone away for a little while; his dead companion is playing in other fields where all the days are holidays, and all the people are good. It may be a childish fancy that will disappear by and by, but it is a harmless fancy it is no injury to encourage; while it lasts it is beautiful and stimulating. Those that believe in immortality after the simple old-fashioned manner, can do no better than encourage this untutored belief; and they who cannot succeed in believing it at all, may—as they recall the happy days when they did—be glad that their children have it, and even hope they may never lose it. After all, nobody knows; to deny is not more reasonable than to affirm; and affirmation gladdens, while denial saddens the heart. What doubter of immortality would wish his children to doubt? Their faith does more to cheer him than he thinks. While that lasts, the hope in his own heart is not quite dead. The hereafter is not utter night.

I have only a single word to add, a word of kind but earnest remonstrance for those who abandon the religious instructions of their children, and leave the ideal side of their nature unprovided for. The cultivation of this side certainly is a part of rational

education. It is not secured without trouble, a trouble particularly heavy with us who cannot use the common appliances. By-and-by we shall have Sunday-schools suited to our ideas. Till then we must do what we can in private ways to make the objects of our own admiration hope and love dear to our children. Drifting is neither honorable nor wise. Doing nothing for the most part is doing ill. If we take pains and do the best we can, the time when we can do better will soon come.

read scientific books  
 & buy maps for 1 & 2  
 3- child naturally believes  
 in life.

# THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

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The Sermon on the Mount occupies three chapters of the Gospel of Matthew,—the fifth, sixth and seventh. That in its present form it did not come from Jesus may be set down as certain. Jesus spoke in another language, and left no records of his teaching. Our present Gospels are in Greek, not translations from an original, but independent compositions, last editions probably of much smaller and less finished works which have now been lost. A few fragments of the original Matthew remain, very few and scanty, that are curious as literature, but of little value as throwing light on the actual teaching of Jesus. The Sermon on the Mount, as we have it, was produced nearly a hundred years after Jesus' death, and may therefore be read as a composition by itself, and judged by its own contents, without, in one way or another reflecting on the prophet of Galilee.

The discourse is put before us in two editions. One by Matthew and one by Luke. Mark has no such connected oration; John has no trace of it. The two editions differ much superficially and essentially; differ so much that old scholars who were anxious about the genuineness of the books, surmised that the discourse was not the same, but two separate expressions of similar ideas. This theory is now abandoned. The two discourses are held to be the same, but differently arranged and construed. Matthew's report is nearly four times as long as Luke's; it represents the Sermon as delivered in the outset of the Christ's public ministry, whereas the discourse related by Luke was given at a later period. According to Matthew, Jesus ascends a mountain and sits while speaking; according to Luke he comes down and stands in the plain. These discrepancies probably have some symbolical significance; what, it is unimportant here to suggest; in themselves they are of little moment. More considerable is the circumstance that Luke follows the Beatitudes with a Series of Woes. "Woe unto you that are rich; woe unto you that are full; woe unto you when all men speak well of you,—whereof in Matthew there is no suggestion. More significant even than this divergence is the quite opposite character given to the Beatitudes. Matthew makes Jesus pronounce the



benedictions on states of heart, Luke on conditions of fortune. In the former we read, "Blessed are the poor in spirit;" in the latter "Blessed are ye poor;" in the former, "Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness;" in the latter "Blessed are ye hungry;" in the former "Blessed are they that mourn," meaning from inward sorrow; in the latter, "Blessed are ye that weep now," meaning on account of a painful lot. The loveliest of the benedictions "Blessed are the Meek," "Blessed are the Merciful," "Blessed are the Pure in Heart," "Blessed are the Peacemakers," are recorded by the first Evangelist alone. No blessing could be pronounced on opposite qualities, and they are omitted from lack of an antithesis.

The discourse, as reported by Matthew, is more spiritual in tenor and morally more elevated; but it is delivered expressly in the interest of the old religion. It seems not to be so at first sight; it seems to be directed pointedly against it;—"Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." But throughout the Gospels, the Scribes and Pharisees are represented as the champions of religion in its ceremonial and literal aspect, slaves to the letter, subjects of the form, while Jesus is represented as a teacher of the spirit



against the letter, of the essence beneath the form. The true religion of Moses, in his view is to be found in the writings of the prophets, not in the institutions of the priests. The prophets and the priests stood for opposing and even irreconcilable ideas. The priest was conservative, the prophet was a reformer. The priest was a builder of temples, the prophet was an inculcator of principles; the priest consecrated altars, the prophet blessed sentiments; the priest offered the sacrifice of bulls and rams, the prophet bade people surrender their violent and coarse appetites; the priest was a stubborn enemy to change, the prophet urged incessant change; the priest would have made the Law a fixture, the prophet would make it a life. Jesus simply takes the prophet's side when, at the beginning of the discourse, as reported in the first Gospel, he declares: "I am not come to destroy the Law or the Prophets; I am come not to destroy but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot, one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law until all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." The Sermon on the Mount proposes, then, no new

doctrine; its teaching was many hundred years old when Christianity had its existence. It was the teaching of the most advanced and earnest minds of the nation who had for ages devoted themselves to the task of maintaining pure religion.

The Sermon on the Mount is but a restatement of familiar moral and spiritual truths. Every precept in it can be paralleled, in some cases, matched word for word, by sentences from the Old Testament or the Talmud. For example:

“This is the way of the wise—to be humble and of contrite spirit. Be like the bed of the ocean; like the earthen vessel, which preserves the wine; like the threshold, over which every one steps; like the peg on the wall, whereon every one hangs his cloak.”

“They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.”

“The meek shall possess the land. A benevolent eye, humility of spirit, and a mind free from pride characterize the true disciples of Abraham.”

“The merciful shall receive mercy.”

“With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure.”

“Love peace and pursue peace: love mankind and bring them near to the Law. The moral condition of the world depends on three things—Truth, Justice and Peace.”

“Those who are afflicted, and do not afflict in return, who suffer everything for the love of God, and

bear their burden with a gladsome heart, shall be rewarded according to the promise. Those who love the Lord shall be invincible as the rising sun in his might."

"Whoso lifts up his hand against his neighbor, though he do not strike him, is called an offender and a sinner."

"Whoso looketh on the wife of another with a lustful eye, is considered as if he had committed adultery."

"Let thy Yea be just, and thy Nay be likewise just."

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor; even if he be a criminal, and has forfeited his life, practice charity towards him in his last moments."

"What thou wouldest not like to be done unto you, do not to others: this is the fundamental law."

"Judge not thy fellow-man until thou hast been similarly situated."

"With the measure we mete we shall be measured again."

"If one be admonished to take the splinter out of his eye, he will answer: Take the beam out of thine own."

"Love thy neighbor as thyself; this is a fundamental law of the Bible."

"Imitate God in His goodness; Be towards thy

fellow creatures, as He is towards the whole creation."

"A man who studies the law, and acts in accordance with its commandments, is likened to a man who builds a house, the foundation of which is made of freestone and the superstructure of bricks. Storm and flood cannot injure the house. But he who studies the law, and is destitute of good actions, is likened unto the man who builds the foundation of his house of brick and mortar, and raises the upper storys with solid stone. The flood will soon undermine and overturn the house." \*

This correspondence between the higher ethics of the old and the new law detracts nothing from the authority of either, but rather adds to the weight of both. The older a maxim and the more widely professed, the more solemn its sanction. Age, that weakens everything else, confirms virtuous precepts. Popularity, that cheapens everything else, enhances the preciousness of rules of experience. It is to the credit of a system of morals that it is not peculiar to an age or a people. The claim to originality is suspicious. The boast of special revelations provokes criticism and dissent. The strength and glory of the

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\* For other passages see Conway's "Sacred Anthology," ch. i.

Sermon on the Mount lie in the fact that it echoes the voice of a world-wide conviction ; it repeats with fresh emphasis and more touching pathos the lessons that the wisest of many generations have taken most deeply to heart.

These lessons are the prescriptions of ideal ethics. They are not popular in the sense of being vulgar, the ethics of the street or the mob, the average ethics of the market, the cheap commonplaces of mankind. The conscience they give expression to is the conscience of the best, of prophets who saw farther than they could tread, of saints who felt more than they could do, of dreamers who tried in vain to realize the lovely intimations of their quiet hours, of visionaries whose inward glance penetrated so far beneath the surface of external utilities that their hearts were saddened by the distance between the actual and the possible, between *ought* and *can*. They are the ethics of the meek, the humble, the aspiring, the gentle, the pure, whose hearts are devoid of hate, whose spirits are empty of pride. They are the ethics of humanity regenerated and glorified ; the ethics of the millennium. They are true, intrinsically, absolutely and forever true ; true in heaven, true among angels, true outside of space and time, true as truth itself. Their intrinsic truth we never think of questioning. It is only their relative truth, that we hesitate for the

moment to accept. Pegasus harnessed to a cart was Pegasus, still and proved his identity by demolishing the cart; but the driver, who saw his produce ruined, was not comforted by the reflection that the creature that so unceremoniously overturned his fortune was a steed of the sun.

The distinction between abstract and applied ethics must be borne continually in mind. The ideal morality does not work well amid worldly conditions; not merely because it is expensive; nor because it is uncomfortable; nor because it conflicts with mercenary aims; nor because it is hard for worldly dispositions; but because the ideal is by its nature in advance of the actual, the abstract is more indefinite than the concrete, the possible is more in the future than the actual. The ethical teachings of the New Testament prove their ~~business~~ <sup>wisdom</sup> by their impracticability. If such as we could live up to them they would come far short of being divine.

In the first place we have not knowledge or discernment to apply them. The mere proposal to do so brings us into complications we cannot get out of, raises a question of means and appliances we cannot answer. It is easy to say "be just," "be kind," "be compassionate;" but what do justice, kindness and compassion in particular cases require? The sentiment must find expression in words, in actions, in



courses of conduct ; what words, what actions, what courses of conduct ? Pity the suffering ; but in what form shall pity clothe itself ? Help the poor ; but in what consists help ? Forgive the erring ; but how make forgiveness effective or touching ? One of our recent discoveries is that the true way to assist men is to assist them to assist themselves, but we have gone a very little way as yet in the method of achieving this result. Our knowledge is woefully insufficient, both of human beings and of social conditions. To enunciate a principle is one thing, to organize institutions is another ; principles do not, on the spot, organize their own institutions.

Again, the human will is far behind the human perception in culture ; sentiment is in advance of principle. The best people are subject to the limitations of the age they live in, and so limited by them, that, with straining at the leash they can only by a little overpass the highest average of conduct. Meditation opens to them a boundless field of thought ; books impart to them the finest conceptions of the most exalted minds ; but when they come in contact with ordinary human relations, they are unable to move. It is easier now to be faithful to conviction than it was a century ago ; it will be easier a century hence than it is now ; for the reason that *the mass of men* will be more enlightened and un-

encumbered. The social movement will be freer. The moral sense will meet with fewer obstacles. The inward eye will be clearer. The law of progress which implies gradual and slow advance in knowledge, gradual and slow increase in power, forbids the expectation of excellence that is untimely and out of place: discourages the hope of a heavenly purity in muddy streets. The best cannot be better because the worst are so bad. The lead in the feet neutralizes the air beneath the wings. The good and the bad, the right-minded and the wrong-minded, share the same existence on the same terms, throw their lives into a common pool, and together create the average that tells how much progress has been made. Neither influence can abolish the other, but each modifies the other. Even Jesus could not live out his own law; he could die for his ideas, but he had to die in the effort to enact them. The world he lived in was not constructed on ideal principles, and it crushed the reformer it could not entertain. Nay, it would seem that he did not venture to enact his principles among men. The saying: "Give not that which is holy to the dogs, and cast not your pearls before swine," if it came from him, which is doubtful, proves that he too felt the wisdom of making his methods conform to the requirements of necessity. Not that he deliberately excused himself from obe-

dience to his principle, or studied the policy of conformity to circumstances, or made no effort to stretch to the utmost the letter of duty ; he probably found that beyond a certain point it was unstretchable. With him, too, the rule was "thus far and no farther."

All this becomes plain when, from general considerations, we come to particulars. Let us take two or three of the most explicit and unqualified precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, and imagine their working in the actual state of society.

The first shall be, trust in providence. This is inculcated in the most unreserved language. "Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns ; yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin ; and yet, I say unto you that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Take no thought, saying, 'what shall we eat ? What shall we drink ? Wherewithal shall we be clothed ?' For after these things, the people of the world seek, and your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and the righteousness that He requires, and all these things shall be added *to you.*" There is no mistaking this language ;

every attempt to break the force of it is futile on the face of it. To say that taking no thought for the morrow, means taking no over anxious or unnecessary thought; reduces the strong declaration to the cheapest of commonplaces. To say that Jesus simply recommends a trustful disposition which sustains and pacifies the mind while the labor of the hands goes on, is to deprive the charge of the very pith of its meaning. For the object of Jesus is to discourage the labor of the hands, and bring earthly endeavor to an end. Ingenious divines from the text "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness," draw the lesson, that success comes most assuredly and abundantly to those who work in obedience to the deepest convictions of rectitude, who aim first of all to be honest, fair, upright men, consulting the general good, and keeping in view the best kind of well-being, while toiling for wealth as a means of doing good to their fellow-men. Very excellent teaching, certainly, but not the teaching of Jesus.

By the "Kingdom of God" he means, not goodness, uprightness, or any kind of admirable personal qualities, but a new order of things which he was about to inaugurate by express commission from the Almighty. The direction to seek first the Kingdom of God, was equivalent to the command to leave all

and follow him, to abandon occupation, pursuit, calling, social position, advantage, friends, kindred, and join the band of expectants that the Messiah drew about him. It was a direction, not to work from loftier motive, or for worthier aim, but to definitely and at once abstain from work altogether, and live as the fowls and lilies seemed to live in instant reliance on heavenly powers. The assumption was that a Heavenly Father, who had special designs with them which required that they should leave all, would supply their natural wants in the time of suspense. A multitude of considerations confirms this view of the matter. In fact, the whole gospel is attuned to this key.

But to make such a precept a rule for daily living would be impossible. Such absolute trust is instinctively repugnant to the active mind. A few singularly constituted people have succeeded in attaining to it, and claim, with sincerity, that the gospel promise has been fulfilled in their case. More than one pious philanthropist of this nineteenth century professes to sustain some flourishing institution by accepting implicitly this principle of trust; doing nothing out of prudence, asking nothing, providing nothing, but like the lilies lying open to the sunshine, like the birds confiding to the buoyancy of the elements. George Müller claims that he main-

tains a large and prosperous orphan asylum on this principle, neither working himself, nor asking others to work ; asking no contributions, issuing no appeals. If Mr. Müller does this, and I would not impeach his word, he must be a very singularly organized and endowed person ; an exception to all known rules ; a magnetic man, gifted with remarkable power to impress and influence others ; a man of enormous absorbing and distributing capacity, who affects people at a distance without making a movement. I would not deny that such claim may, in such special case, be justified by literal facts. The occult forces which cannot be calculated or measured, which have their combinations and currents, may, according to some untraceable law, conspire to bring about results that no foresight or skill could produce. Because George Müller has powers extra-human on his side, it does not follow that another will have who follows with severe contrivance where he leads from genius. I knew one, a sincere, simple-minded, disinterested philanthropist, self-forgetting, self-sacrificing, thinking never of his private comfort or fame, who, when he travelled on benevolent errands, never bought a ticket nor took money in his purse. He was always, he said, furthered by some mysterious occurrence which others might think was chance, but which he believed was providence. A wise pro-

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verb says that "Fortune favors fools." It certainly does not favor all fools, but only the fool of genius who carries a private key that unlocks the doors of the celestial or demoniac treasure house. It will not quite do for people to become more foolish than they are in hope of being more prosperous. The present folly of mankind is not so fruitful of health and wealth, that the loss or serious diminution of the small stock of wisdom so painfully gathered is desirable.

The improvement of mankind thus far, if improvement there has been, is due apparently to hard work, prudence, energy, self-reliance, the severe training of the will, the careful use of all the earthly opportunities. Whatever help may have come from above seems to have been secured by faithfulness to immediate occasions. No person, and no people is known to have prospered by doing nothing. Even the fowls of the air perish if taken by surprise, by unexpected seasons. They must build their nest according to law, and migrate on the precise day or they are lost. Even lilies loose their loveliness if disobedient to the law that provides them with sunshine, and yields juices to their steady application. If they stand in the shade or desist from their labor of pumping up sap into their stems, no providence will *save them*. The grass of the field toils in its way,

or its day would be short indeed. The meanest plant earns its living. The more toil, the more trust, the more trust, the more toil is the law. An age that never trusts at all, but toils with broad back upturned to the glory of the stars will be disappointed in its returns of material wealth; an age that does nothing but trust, that stands with broad face upturned to the skies will be disappointed in the returns of spiritual wealth. There is no trust so well certified as that of perseverance. On this side the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount cannot claim to have justified themselves. And after all, who trusts so entirely as the worker on long lines, the explorer of a savage continent, the discoverer of new lands or seas, the great merchant or financier, whose operations rest absolutely on the fidelity of a million causes? The most audacious doer is the most child-like dependent. No one relies so absolutely on Providence as he that throws himself most courageously upon its resources.

Let us propose another test. The duty to maintain the poor is equally imperative with that of trusting the Lord. "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." The precept runs on a line with another given elsewhere: "Sell what thou hast and give alms, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven."

And both are but echoes of our Bible-saying that "he that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord." The rule, be it remarked, is in no sense provisional, nor is it left to the interpretation of circumstances. The command is given apparently on the same ground that was assigned for the practice of utter trust in providence—namely the transientness of mundane things, and the regeneration that was soon to take place, and render all existing social and material distinctions idle or worse. Money was an encumbrance. The rich man could as little go into the kingdom with his luggage as the camel could pass through the needle gate of Jerusalem with his burden on his back. The final cause of the poor was the relief of the rich from their costly impediments. But for the poor the rich must as surely go to perdition, as a city without sewerage would die of fever. Lazarus was sent to be the salvation of Dives. The only point kept in view was the admission to the kingdom. The poor had a free pass by virtue of their poverty. The rich purchased admission by voluntarily becoming poor. The logical inference would be that they should throw their wealth into the sea, and resolve to create no more; for by giving all to the poor, they so far made them rich and jeopardized *their* hope of bliss hereafter. The thought of civilization, of social life in its modern sense,

of continued increase in general prosperity, of organic sympathy and co-operation never entered into the prophet's reckoning. The nineteenth century after Christ he did not foresee. But the dwellers in the nineteenth century read with wondering eyes the lessons given to the first.

Generosity is an admirable virtue ; to be kind to the poor, pitiful of their misfortunes, liberal in supplying their necessities, interested in their well being, thoughtful of their betterment, is commendable, but nothing of this kind satisfies the preacher of the Sermon on the Mount. To give large sums of money expecting no return is at times incumbent on the opulent, and is often done, oftener than is believed, but this is not considered enough. To lend money without asking interest is no uncommon thing, but this is no compliance with the Gospel precept. The Gospel teaches communism. So in the first age of the Church it was understood. So it has been understood many times since by enthusiasts in Asia and Europe, in Southern Europe and Germany.

But what society ever thrived on communism ? It cuts the tap root of social life. It is bad as anything can be for the poor, for if anything might be considered as established it is the law of labor, as the law of humanity. Self respect and ambition are the springs of improvement. The beggar who comes to the door

disclaims the title of beggar, and asks a loan, deluding himself with the hope that he may yet pay it back. The demoralizing effect of gratuitous soup is demonstrable. Let it not be gratuitous soup, but gratuitous coal, clothing, house rent, the process of demoralization would be so swift that humanity itself would be in danger of eradication.

What is so disastrous for the poor would be no less disastrous for the rich. Who would take the trouble to accumulate riches merely that he might have a good deal to give away? Here and there one does this—one or two in a hundred years. They are exceptions that prove the rule to be otherwise. At present, all over the world the impulse to the accumulation of wealth is some form of selfishness. Perhaps no man ever lived who did not act under this impulse in some form. The man who amasses wealth that he may give it away, and lives squalid and penurious while amassing it, would have his name given to the bequest, would be remembered and commemorated as the giver. Some must work to make money in order that there may be money to give away.

Nor as yet have we had experience of a society in which the reciprocal relation between the rich and the poor, the relation of mutual service, a common *dependence*, a daily interchange of qualities and gifts

did not play a conspicuous part. Indeed it is impossible to conceive of any form of organized society where these diversities of condition have no place. It is the effort to *change* the condition that makes the condition endurable. Nothing is so painful as monotony. A monotonous heaven would be insufferable. These are very trite things to say. It surely is not worth while to say them to people not one of whom ever doubted or felt disposed to doubt them. They are said, not on account of their truth but to show how strongly in contrast with them is the morality which Christendom professes to accept. The profession is just sincere enough to embarrass its action in the new methods proposed by scientific students of the social problem, and to perpetuate in a feeble manner the habit of dealing with it that produced, on the whole, results so unfortunate to both rich and poor in other ages and lands. On this subject more light is to be had from the Reports of Social Science Associations than from the Sermon on the Mount.

One more illustration, the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount on the subject of resistance to personal affront and injury. Here, too, the doctrine is equally clear, and equally uncompromising. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, ; But I say unto you that



ye retaliate not on the offender: nay, more, whoever shall smite thee on the one cheek turn to him the other also; and if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat let him have thy cloak too." In reading passages like these all that is best in us responds to the truth of the sentiment. Not the good only but the bad as well, feel, and silently acknowledge the essential beauty and nobleness of the precept. They that will call it visionary, and impracticable, too high for men or women to practise, too humane for the selfish to live by, still confess its depth and purity. Words of profounder, richer significance were never spoken. To say that the practice of such a precept would shut up our courts of law, abolish the legal profession, and dispense with policemen and jails is to pronounce on it the heartiest judgment of praise; for courts of law, and the legal profession and police are expedients and very poor expedients at the best for bandaging hurts they cannot heal. They exist because humanity does not. As perfect obedience to the laws of health would abolish the medical profession, as perfect obedience to the moral law would abolish clergymen and make churches useless, so would perfect obedience to the law of kindness abolish government and the state. But as the laws of health are still abstractions, too imperfectly understood to be obeyed,—as the law of

goodness is an abstraction, too little explored to be followed, so this law of kindness is an abstraction, incomprehensible to all but the very few; and those few have not so illustrated it as to make it a working rule for the many. The few instances only make us sigh because the qualities that made them possible, cannot be imitated or taken example by.

The precept is personal. It appeals to the individual conscience. It limits its view to the relations between man and man. And here it assumes the moral perfection of the individual, a nature in him thoroughly regenerate. For no other can practise effectively on such a rule. As a mere rule it is powerless. Simply to act on such a principle without an absolute, living, convincing faith in its potency, simply to *act* on it, mechanically, without the corresponding sincerity that carries the contagion of faith with it, would be productive only of harm. Some actions are weighty without soul. But the whole virtue of this is in soul. In ancient Roman story it is related, that on occasion of the capture of the city by the Gauls, a company of the barbarians penetrated the senate chamber of the Capitol and there came face to face with the august body of senators sitting silent and stately in their official chairs. The intruders, awe-struck by the scene, stopped and seemed about to retreat, when one of their number,

bolder or more inquisitive than the rest, approached the nearest senator and felt of his long white beard. The outraged noble resented the insult by smiting the soldier with his staff. The spell was broken; the awe was dispelled; the swords were out of their sheaths in an instant, and the blood of the old men reddened the marble floor of their sanctuary. There was no majesty behind the beard. The dignity was in appearance only; the effect was purely scenic. The aged counsellors thought it would be sufficient to *look* sublime. Had they been as grand as they looked, the barbarians would probably have slunk away discomfited. Their chiefs would have been abashed, and would have made treaty with the majesty that enthralled their souls. The power of character depends on the character, not on the gesture. This rule of submission, in the absence of a *soul* of submission, would provoke more violence than it would check. That love is stronger than hate, kindness than selfishness, forgiveness than vindictiveness, need not be questioned. Certainly they are; but the love must be love, no counterfeit of it; the kindness must be unfeigned, the forgiveness must be from the heart; and with the regenerate only can this be.

I will not insist on the point of which much has been made, that no enemy is strictly a private ene-

my ; that the misdoer's deed is an evil to the whole community ; that society at large has an interest in its correction ; that the individual must consider this . and be careful how he so condones an offence, submits to an imposition, or passes by an outrage, as to let loose the evil doer on his neighbors. When the injury is not purely personal, but of a kind that affects the welfare of society,—as where one commits a fraud, or blasts a reputation, or performs a deed of cruelty or heartlessness,—has the victim a right to forgive and thus make it easier for the guilty man to pursue his nefarious course? To put aside private resentment, to suppress personal animosity, to disinfect the secret chamber of the heart of hateful purposes and wishes, is a simple thing ; but to let the guilty go unpunished, the criminal run at large unmolested, is another matter. Both may be reconciled ; but both must be considered ; neither duty can rightly supplant the other.

But this is a question I will not enter on. The Sermon on the Mount does not raise it, and it has no place here. The command touches the personal respect of the problem only. But it touches that heroically, not sentimentally. For the private duty, power of the celestial kind is demanded. For it must be presumed that the preacher is prescribing a method by which the evil doer ought to be restrained and

converted; and nothing restrains or converts but power; the power of love not the amiability of it, or the sentimentality of it; power that goes to the very roots of the being.

To acquire more and more of this power, should, of course, be the aim and serious prospect of good people, and to help the acquisition of it we read and ponder the language of the Sermon on the Mount. It is not a practical discourse, in the popular sense of the term, but contemplative; not a sermon for the street, but for the closet; not a schedule for the market, but a chart for the skies. It tells men not what they must do, but what they must aim at; not how they must behave, but what they must try to become. It declares what ought to be, what must be, what will be, when human nature justifies its constitution. No thoughtful person believes that things are satisfactory as they are. That they may be better than they are, that the rules and principles on which men conduct themselves may be nobler, we study these great sayings, impressing on our hearts their truth and cultivating the disposition they demand. By the severest study of ideal principle motives are purified, hopes are sustained, and the bright vistas into a better world kept open.



# MATERIALISM.

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Materialism has a bad name. The ugliest associations gather about it. The materialist is reputed as one who either has thrown aside or lacks qualities that most adorn, glorify and console humanity. The ordinary underbred materialist is regarded as a sensualist, of coarse appetites and passions that he does everything to gratify, nothing to restrain. The cultivated materialist is considered to be polished, cold, heartless, elegant, but solitary and sneering. The sensitive materialist is presumed to be melancholy, lonely, sorrowful, a man without a horizon of hope, with a bleak expanse of infinitude above, a desert of vacancy before; a man with nothing to venerate, adore or spiritually love, bound to his fellow men by transitory bonds, loving, and parting forever from those he loves, with graves about him that are full of ashes. The materialist, in the common judgment, is



one who lives in and for material things, money, power, place, fame, fashion, enjoyment; to whom aspiration, faith, honor, humanity, are strangers; to whom disinterestedness and sacrifice are fictions of the sentimental; a man of conventionalities, expediences, policies that cover months, not of aims and purposes that forecast eternities; a man of idols, not of ideals.

This prejudice is a bequest to us from the old belief that matter is the seat of evil, and is by its nature opposed to spirit,—neither matter nor spirit being conceived with much distinctness—matter being conceived as visible, spirit as invisible; matter as sensible and tangible, spirit as supersensible and intangible. But distinctions like these are good no longer since modern chemistry has explored the constituent elements of matter. Matter has become to us the most evanescent, ethereal of all things; so fine that the microscope cannot see it; so light that the retort cannot arrest it. Of matter may be said what the writer of Ecclesiasticus says of wisdom, “It is one only, manifold, subtle, lively, clear, undefiled, plain, not subject to hurt, overseeing all things, and going through all most pure and subtle spirits.” Hear Tyndall, “Let us travel in company to the Caribbean sea, and halt upon the heated water. What is that sea, and what is the sun that heats it? Answering—

for myself I say that they are both matter. I fill a glass with the sea water and expose it on the deck of the vessel; after some time the liquid has all disappeared and left a solid residue of salts in the glass behind. We have mobility, invisibility—apparent annihilation. In virtue of

The glad and secret aid  
The Sun unto the ocean paid,

the water has taken to itself wings and flown off as vapor. From the whole surface of the Caribbean Sea such vapor is rising; and now we must follow it,—not upon our legs, however, or in a ship, nor even in a balloon,—but by the mind's eye. Compounding the northward motion of the vapor with the earth's axial rotation, we track our fugitive through the higher atmospheric regions, obliquely across the Atlantic Ocean, to Western Europe, and into our familiar Alps. Here another wonderful metamorphosis occurs. Floating on the calm, cold air, and in presence of the cold firmament, the vapor condenses, not only to particles of water, but to particles of crystalline water. These coalesce to stars of snow, and afterward fall upon the mountains in forms so exquisite that, when first seen, they never fail to excite rapture. As to beauty, indeed, they put the work of the lapidary to shame, while as to accuracy they render concrete the abstractions of the geometer.

Are these crystals matter?" Of modern mysteries the mystery of matter is the greatest. And this is the mystery it most deeply concerns the keenest minds to explore.

It is not true then that the materialist is a man of coarse conceptions. The true, the devoted materialist is a man of the most delicate conceptions; and the more enthusiastic a materialist he is, the finer his conceptions are; becoming finer and finer till in subtlety they surpass the ordinary notions of spirit as much as these surpass the ordinary notions of matter. Indeed, set face to face the materialist and the spiritualist of the common type, and by their conversation you would suppose that they had changed places.

In intellectual quality spiritualism possesses no advantage over Materialism. Is it superior to it in moral quality? What are moral qualities? If such exist they must be affectionateness, kindness, personal fidelity, friendliness, humanity in its several forms of benevolence, compassion, regard for social rights and duties, concern for the general welfare of men. It cannot be said that the materialist is, above other men, wanting in these. Without claiming that he is better than others, or that he owes such goodness as he has to his materialism, still it may be *claimed that he is no worse than others; that his*

materialism does not demoralize or dehumanize him. He is responsive to sweet and noble sentiments ; he has sympathy with just and true aims ; he is friendly of feeling towards estimable persons. In private and public relations he is as worthy of regard as his neighbors who hold other opinions, and regard him with abhorrence. This, at all events, is true of the conspicuous materialists, of such as are known of all men. Some of them are remarkable for the amiability of their dispositions. It was but the other day that Archbishop Manning paid a cordial tribute to the amiable private qualities of John Tyndall at the very moment he rebuked his materialism.

Further, these men, some of them, the best known of them, are spiritually minded to a degree superior to that indicated by general goodness, kindness or amiability. Their love of truth is remarkable, their disregard for the opinion of the fashionable world, their indifference to wealth and position, their devotion to knowledge, their abhorrence of ignorance, error and unreasoning prejudice, their willingness to lead lives of scantily remunerated toil in order that the level of intelligence and happiness may be raised. Probably the great qualities of simplicity, sincerity, self-denial, which constitute the saintly character, are in this generation more illus



triously exhibited by this class of people than by any. They feel, some of them, a call as to a holy mission, and they respond to it with the zeal of apostles.

Is it objected to them, that while respecting spiritual qualities, they do so under conditions that, to the majority of mankind, seriously compromise their spirituality? that the materialist, as a materialist, denies the existence of an immortal part, a deathless soul, and therefore clips the wings of aspiration, takes from the spiritual being the world he naturally longs after, deprives him of his full opportunity for progress, and cuts off his hopes of felicity? But the materialist does not of necessity deny the existence of a soul or question the personal immortality. Even supposing him to believe that organization is primary, that what is called soul is the product of organization, that soul is but an expression of organization,—still, as he cannot follow organization through all its actual changes and possible transformations, he cannot undertake to deny that immortality is impossible. Were organization limited to *this form* of organization, or to any known form, such conclusion would follow. But the materialist's conception of matter forbids his limiting organization to any visible or invisible

form. He is obliged to admit every conceivable and even every inconceivable possibility of matter. To say that any particular combination of atoms or movements is essential to the existence of spiritual qualities is to say what, as a consistent materialist, he has no right to say, and cannot presume to say. What special association of atoms constitutes or creates a soul, he is as far from knowing as any ignorant person is ; he cannot tell that within the visible frame of man, there may not be an interior frame inaccessible to his keenest scrutiny, which is the home and vehicle of the spirit, and which, on the dissolution of the grosser body, is detached and released into a sphere of perfectly congenial conditions. He cannot tell that the grosser body does not contain within itself capacities for germination that will exert themselves on the dissolution of the body, and bring the spirit to perfect flower.

It is the generally accepted doctrine of modern materialism that the universe is constituted of atoms that are infinitesimally small, susceptible of infinite combinations, and absolutely indestructible. Such a doctrine easily lends itself to the belief in immortality. The visible forms of organization, as compared with the invisible are few in number. The number of visible forms depends on the keenness of the vision. To no vision are all forms visible—not even



to the vision of the microscope. Why then on the materialist's theory, may we not be surrounded by immortal spirits? Why may not Milton's famous lines be literally true—

Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth,  
Unseen both when we wake and when we sleep.

It is not said that materialists, as a class, do believe in personal immortality. It is probable that some do, and that others do not. But that some do, that others are in suspense, is evidence that there is nothing in the doctrine of materialism which compels disbelief. In this article, a materialist may accept the doctrine of the New Jerusalem Church, which brings in the philosophy of evolution of finer from coarser forms to explain the future existence of the soul and the constitution of a spiritual world within or beyond this. In the course of animal development from the primeval ages till now, the law by which organizations have succeeded each other, dropping off heavier elements and putting on lighter ones, and by which the spiritual qualities, so called, desire, ideality, intellect, imagination, reason, have been unfolded in exact proportion to the perfection of organized being, is, so far as we know, without a single exception. Why should not the process continue after death, and the more perfect type that succeeds the present, be accompanied

by a spiritual force and beauty of which now we have but rare and feeble intimation?

If material forms are literally imperishable, if matter is eternal, then that whereof it is the condition is imperishable and eternal also, and materialism so far from destroying the faith in immortality, to this extent lends sanction to it, removes, in fact, one of the objections to it, urged of old from the side of materialism itself. They were imperfect materialists who on grounds of materialism alone disbelieved. The perfected materialist, who brings the finer faculties to bear on the task of investigating all the potentialities of matter, may disbelieve on other grounds, but not on this.

The materialist, therefore, as such, must stand vindicated against the charge of being unspiritual in mind. His temptation is rather, if he is an enthusiast in his creed, to an excessive refinement of sensibility, an over susceptibility to mental impressions, that approaches disease. His intellect runs to mysticism.

Now let us turn to the other side, and inquire if the spiritualism that vaunts its superiority, that denounces materialism as being coarse and sensual, as denying the immortality of the soul, and even destroying confidence in the soul's existence, succeeds in evading the same charge when brought against

itself. Can spiritualism, so called,—the spiritualism of the Roman Catholics and the Evangelical Protestants—claim to be clear of the taint of materialism, sometimes in a gross and offensive form? In pure spirit, spirit quite detached from organization, completely disembodied, wholly exempted from conditions, nobody believes, ever did believe, or ever can believe. The Church of Rome is a material organization of very imposing proportions and very solid character, representing, indeed, every form of material grandeur, wealth, dominion, authority, estates, laws, cities, palaces, orders of men and women, even troops and police. In fact, it claims to be “the visible Church” by eminence, through whose instrumentality, spiritual things are made palpable to the senses; divine things literally taking on form in its symbols, and color in its vestments, and fragrance in its incense; its Christ looking out of a picture, or sweating in a statue, or bleeding in a phial; the Mother of God appearing in convents.

The sacraments of the Church, which are vehicles of the supernatural grace, and without which the supernatural grace would not, according to its teaching, be personally communicated at all, with the least certainty, all consist of bodily performances. The mystery of the Transubstantiation centres in a piece of bread. Baptism implies water.



Penance loses its significance in the absence of conscious, usually of physical pain or deprivation. Marriage must have the spoken benediction of a priest, and by that spoken benediction is made indissoluble, though the interior soul of love in it may have been destroyed by hopeless alienation, neglect or cruelty. The material aspect of Romanism impresses every one who enters for the first time a Catholic Church and sees the confidence the worshippers are allowed to put in images, pictures, symbols and signs; not an idea presented intellectually; not a sentiment commended to the heart; not a duty enforced on its merits; but divine things, even of the most familiar kind, interpreted to the eye, the ear, the touch, and pains not taken to interpret the symbols back again into ideas! This is materialism. Not in the sense of externalism merely, but in the sense of physical potency. The material thing is allowed to be substituted for the immaterial.

True, the demand is that they that touch the symbol shall spiritualize it before they touch it; the assurance is that none but those who do so spiritualize it partake of its virtue. But how much effort is made to test the spirituality, or to ensure it? So long as the symbol alone is presented while the spirituality is left to implication, so long as the assurance is a form of words and the blessing is pro-

nounced on the applicant who goes through the form, the charge of materialism is not met. Were the material form to be abolished, there is no doubt that the Church would instantly decline. Take away the material symbols, and the sacraments would perish. The believer who loses hold on divine things when the hand of the priest is withdrawn; who doubts of the salvation of his child because water has not been sprinkled upon it; who fears for the future of a soul that has not been blessed with extreme unction, is surely not freed from the meshes of a very cheap kind of materialism. That the spirit of materialism is not in the intention of the closet theologian, or the officiating priest, does not impair the force of such a statement. As interpreted by the recipient, the efficacy is material. To think of it otherwise requires intellectuality of higher order than the multitude of Romanists possess.

Witness, again, the excitement in Catholic lands because the Christ was reported to have disclosed himself to a poor nun and made her a peculiar receptacle and vehicle of his grace. Witness the thronging of devotees from all parts of Europe and from England, yes, from America, to the shrine where the prodigious manifestation is supposed to have been made. Read the accounts of what the believers did *and said and exhibited* on their way to the holy spot,

their performances on arriving there, the craving for visible sign, the ecstasy over the physical convulsions of the poor lunatic, the worship of rags and pieces of wood, the identification of celestial realities with spots of ground and bodily motions. Divine things at home bodily and mentally deserted, their native lands abandoned, so far as they are concerned, to ignorance, vice, sensuality, while they hastened off to find a Christ that could be felt of, and a heaven that they could tread with mortal feet! Compare this with the visits hitherward of scientific lecturers, who come to instruct us in the knowledge of the universe; with Procter's, who peoples the heavenly space with living thoughts; with Tyndall's, who illustrates the beautiful laws of light, and, going away, bequeaths the wealth he has made to institutions for the diffusion of light! Which is most open to the accusation of materialism? And which kind of materialism is most detrimental to the mental and moral sanity of mankind? Which most honors humanity? Which promises most for the future? Which awakens the most exalted thoughts respecting the dignity and nobleness of man?

Turn to Protestantism, in the form most universally professed among us; in the form at present projected by its most enthusiastic friends. The cen-



tral doctrine is the doctrine of atonement, atonement by means of physical agony, atonement by Blood. In virtue of that agony, on the efficacy of that blood, which the believer is desired to meditate on, redemption from sin is promised. Education is of no account; knowledge is worthless; culture is vain; personal goodness counts for nothing; social kindness is valueless; the truest greatness of mind and character is powerless to help man to health and felicity. The preacher does not recommend larger, truer, more comprehensive ideas; does not advise self-culture, or social philanthropy; does not encourage devotion to the improvement of the human condition by the removal of evil institutions and the establishment of good ones; does not tell the ignorant in what way he may make himself useful to his fellow men; he makes it his sole duty to impress upon him the fact of the great sacrifice and the efficacy of the pangs of death. The Blood! The Blood! is the beginning and the end, the burden of the message, the heart of the appeal. Grant that the hearers are spared some of the offensive particulars that roused the moral indignation of Channing; still the essential thought remains, that by a material operation, the souls of men are to be saved. The absorption in this idea is the remarkable thing; *an absorption* so entire that everything else is for-

gotten, even the dreadful misery and hideous vice that are calling for new and more searching exhibitions of moral power ; for the knowledge of human relations as yet unsuspected by those who need it most sorely ; for the quickening of human kindness in breasts that pity never touched. The materialist, taunted with the accusation of making matter primary and spirit secondary, of making matter creator of spirit, and spirit subject to the conditions which matter imposes, might retort upon his accusers, by asking which does this most persistently or most disastrously ? The man who does his utmost to refine matter, to call men away from its grosser associations, to exhibit the beauty of its higher expressions, and in so doing, to induce respect for its laws and reverence for its possibilities, or he who keeps in mind images of mortal agony, and associates the noblest destinies of the soul with the blood of a human victim ? If the tendency of the materialist be upward, and the tendency of the spiritualist be downward, which is the more open to the imputation of practical materialism ?

Another point suggests itself. The conception of the hereafter as entertained on the one hand by the materialist, on the other by the spiritualist. The materialist looks forward to the unfolding of human nature in new forms of glory. Whether or no he

be a believer in personal immortality, he believes in the immortality of truth and good influence, and sees in the changes that succeed one another, as form after form fades away, the steady increase of light and love. The diminution of suffering, the decrease of misery, the removal of physical obstacles to intellectual progress, the lightening of social burdens, the expansion and refinement of the mortal are elements of his hope. Does he believe in personal immortality, it is an immortality bright with promise for everybody, a future of opportunity in which the intelligent principle, disencumbered from the grosser material form that was built around it here, and clothed in raiment of etherial light, shall use its finer organs with joyous alacrity, and find help where before it had met with hindrance; a future of transfiguration, in which the organization, being more delicate and finely attuned, like a newly strung harp, shall produce sounds of unexampled sweetness and fulness of tone, proving what perfect strains may be enticed from material things, a future in which new combinations of elements, new adjustments of force, new phases of transformation, will create, as it were, a new being, the same in as much as the essential organization is the same, different in as much as the manifestations of capacity are different; a future in which the possibility of



organization shall be called forth, the greater sensibility of form encouraging and resulting in a greater sensibility of spirit.

Is he a disbeliever in personal immortality—still death is in his view, but a change, in which the element of personal identity, the link of consciousness is lost, and disappears in the chasm between the successive states, but in which everything else is preserved, every particle of matter, every moment of force, every grain of impulse, every scruple of thought or feeling, every tendency of moral law conviction or purpose, in short the whole being of the person as a character, the whole influence of the person as a social power. Thus whether he believes in the immortality of the individual or no, he believes that nothing of substance ever dies; that life goes on persistently in spite of change, nay, by means of change; that life means joy and power; that, as matter is sifted and strained, so in experience, the factors of pain distress and sadness being winnowed or worn away, the essential good will be perfected.

Contrast with a belief in the hereafter like this, the belief entertained by most of the so-called spiritualists in creed. Here the suggestions are material, there being scarcely a refinement in any of the fundamental conditions. Time and place, scenery

and stage effect are all given. An imagery composed of tangible appurtenances is supplied, a throne, a judge, a book, audible voices, visible beings. The happiness of the "elect" consists of elements such as constitute earthly felicity in strictly human circumstances, pleasures of social intercourse, freedom from disquiet, release from sorrow. We will say nothing of the coarser delights of dress, entertainment, amusement, that made so large a feature in the satisfactions of immortals half a century ago. The misery of the damned,—for an extensive provision for the rejected is of great account in the "evangelical future,"—is pictured under material representations that even now have a taint of the corporeal upon them. It being difficult to convey the idea of suffering except as physical pain, the appliances here are still of a physical character. The doctrine of the resurrection of the body, still preached by all, save a few philosophical divines, owes its vitality as it owes its presence in the creed, to its convenience as supplying a palpable ground for future punishment; and the refinements that the doctrine has undergone,—a spiritual body being substituted for an animal body,—while evading some of the obvious objections to the original article, lent additional weight to the fear of agony hereafter by furnishing a more sensitive *subject* for the demoniac whips and forks.

The idea of conscious anguish hereafter, though the anguish be not corporeal like that depicted by Dante, though it be mental and moral, anguish of conscience, anguish of soul, is in itself material. It suggests tears, cries, groans, melancholy and depression, darkness, bitterness, solitude, a shadow as of death. Though the wailing and gnashing be inaudible, they are only the more painful and grievous for that. Unhappiness is of the earth; melancholy smells of the graveyard. To picture any portion of the hereafter as a charnel house, a cavern, a place of exile, absence from the "smile of the Lord" is to countenance material views of it. And when to sorrow is added fear, whether it be fear of outward or of inward pain, the impression of earthiness is deepened; the threat of misery after death convicts of materialism the religion that employs it. It is no doubt true that the prophets of this dismal future for the larger portion of their fellow creatures, have softened very much their representations of the wretchedness of the hereafter for those whose wretchedness is assured; but the menace of wretchedness is maintained, and the mystery in which it is shrouded, the uncertainty in which the methods and details of it are left, enhances, and is, perhaps, intended to enhance the effect on the imagination.

• Indeed, in no article of faith does materialism as



best interpreted, stand more favorably contrasted with spiritualism than in this of immortality. Not only is the article itself, in substance, more intellectually, therefore more spiritually interpreted, but the proof on which it is made to rest is more rationally handled. The spiritualism of the churches bases its faith on tradition, materialism appeals to science; the spiritualism of the creeds bases its faith on authority, materialism appeals to knowledge. The former repeats a rumor that has been passed along from century to century; the latter scrutinizes the facts which the immediate universe presents. The former therefore, attracts the lower sensuous fancy, the latter attracts the higher intelligent mind.

The necessity of making religion more spiritual than it is, has long been perceived by believing men of thought and aspiration. The material forms in which it is presented to the uneducated people are perhaps the only forms under which they can apprehend it, though even they are led rather to misapprehension than to apprehension by them; but in these forms the educated have no faith any longer; and the difficulty of entertaining beliefs when divested of forms, is so great that the whole subject is slipping away from the grasp of the enlightened mind. *Religion* is left more and more to the unrefined and

fleshly. Scientific investigations tend to materialism, and materialism is at present associated with unbelief. So between the false materialism on one side and the true materialism on the other, faith drops through.

The need is to detach faith from the spurious materialism of the creed, and to associate it with the genuine materialism of science, in other words to make faith *real*—to associate it with living thoughts and affections, with living duties and actual relations: to put aside as illusive and treacherous, transcendental and visionary, conceptions that constitute so large a portion of what is now regarded as the religious life, and to introduce the solid principles which good men and women daily recognize as the stay and staff of their pilgrimage. What are called religious “experiences” are very often no experiences at all,—but apprehensions, gleaming or glowering, of possible experiences to be met at some distant day; foregleams or fore-shadowings of experience. In place of these we want actual experiences, of feeling, desire, kindness, love—which are not objects of anticipation or apprehension, but of present knowledge; the evidence whereof requires no confirmation, the expression whereof is not artificial. The materialist who makes the fullest, fairest, most conscientious report of the facts of this world, tells us more about these,

their modes and conditions, their interior and exterior effects than the spiritualist does, for he gives account of the constitution of things as they are.

Which is the healthier mind, that which appreciates the real value of spiritual qualities, close about him at the moment or on the spot, or that which, in order to appreciate them places them, far off at the end of time, at a focal distance equivalent to the diameter of the globe? Most of us would say without hesitation that is the healthier mind which recognizes the worth of qualities immediately, where they are actually displayed, or where the conditions for their actual display are furnished ; because then there is no illusion about them ; no distance to lend a meretricious enchantment to the view ; no abstraction of their least attractive element ; and that mind is less healthy which prefers the vision of things divine to their near presence, because such a mind unconsciously imposes on itself, deludes itself into a belief that it loves heavenly qualities when it only dreams of them, that it prizes them when it only hopes for them.

Few things are more disastrous to faith than to make the objects of it unreal: and unreal they *are made* when they are put outside the living world, whether above it or beyond it. Heav-



only things are, of course, the same in substance wherever they are placed. They are always qualities of the heart, attributes of character, states of feeling, and determinations of will. Whether here or hereafter, in this sphere or in any other, they are precisely, in every respect, the same. Surely then they are most real to those who honor, love, and possess them in the sphere where they live and breathe and have their vital being; and they are least real to those who honor and love them at a distance, who do obeisance to them in heaven, and who look forward to possessing them at some future day when the difficulty of earning them shall be reduced to nothing. On a point like this there need be no mistake.

It is not affirmed that materialists do honor and love divine things more than their neighbors. It is quite possible, nay, altogether probable, in many instances that they honor and love them less, because they do not fully comprehend the advantages of their position. All I affirm is that their position is one of advantage, not one of disadvantage, and that when fully comprehended, it will reveal to them capacities they had not suspected, and glories they had never imagined.

To do justice to real things is the demand and the privilege of religion intelligently, we may dare to say, scientifically apprehended. To do justice to

imaginary and visionary things is the demand of religion as conventionally apprehended. In the efforts of the best minds, expended on the most pressing subjects of human interest, penetrating as deep beneath the surface as they can, casting horoscopes of the future as well as they safely may, modest and patient, eager to know but willing to wait, wondering, admiring, trusting much, hoping everything, expectant of the best, because what they have discovered is so good, we have augury of the new faith which will blend ideal things with real, and show how prose and poetry can join to celebrate the praise of the eternal, immortal, invisible.

# IRREVERENCE.

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Reverence is the mother of Religion ; a truer saying than the old one that ignorance is the mother of Devotion. Of the devotion that is born of ignorance it certainly is the mother. But is all devotion born of ignorance ? Is not devotion born also of knowledge ? What means the saying that “ The undevout astronomer is mad ? ” Or, if we allow that ignorance is the mother of *all* devotion, still, inasmuch as ignorance must be our condition so long as our intelligence is limited, and the intelligence of finite beings is limited by the nature of the case, devotion must be a human sentiment as long as man is man and not God. The devotion will simply change its character as knowledge increases. The devoutness of the wise man will take the place of the devoutness of the fool. The worship of the sage will supplant the superstition of the savage. Few men have



equalled the philosopher Immanuel Kant in breadth of intelligence, in depth of reflection, in extent of acquired knowledge. In a thousand years there will be scarcely a thousand men his peers. But Kant said: "Two things fill me with awe,—the starry heavens and the sense of moral responsibility in man." The starry heavens become more wonderful the more they are studied; the sense of moral responsibility in man is a mystery still, and will continue to be a mystery when our psychology is old. Buckle writes: "The origin of veneration is wonder and fear. We wonder because we are ignorant, and we fear because we are weak." But shall we ever cease to be ignorant? Shall we ever cease to be weak? Ignorance will disappear from vast regions where now it reigns, and mind will see clearly and move freely where now it gropes and cowers; but the inscrutable mystery will only deepen as we go on. As the universe becomes simpler in some respects it becomes more complex in others. Knowledge has raised more questions than it has answered. The world is much less awful and confounding to the peasant than to the philosopher. The child when asked what makes it dark, answers without hesitation, "it is because mamma has put out the gas." Will he have an answer as ready twenty years hence, when *he has read the latest theory about light?* And

weakness—are we outgrowing that? The forces that surround us become more appalling and tremendous as we are acquainted with them; we discover our dependence on new laws while we fancy we are securing independence from old ones. The fear may become exalted in character as we are exalted in power: from physical it will rise to mental, from mental to moral, from moral to spiritual or imaginative, till the “holy fear” of the saint extinguishes the bodily fear of the sinner; but awe will grow with the growing intellect, and the knee will bend to wisdom that would not bend to might.

Grant that reverence is the child of wonder and that wonder is the child of mystery—these words do not solve the problem. The mystery of the dark is the mystery of Being. What terrifies in the night is not the feeling that there is *nothing* there, but the feeling that there is *something*. The darkness is thick with demons to the wicked, with deities to the good. The night is the season for contemplation, because though the world is absent, the soul of the world is present; earth recedes, heaven descends; we are alone—with the All-seeing. Primitive men worship in forests,

The woods were God’s first temples.

The grove was the place of silence and mystery. The stately trees, motionless, yet throbbing with the

rush of life, the whispering leaves, the strange noises of insects and creeping things, the sighing, crying, triumphant wind, the flickering light through the foliage, the trembling shadows on the grass, the vanishing glimpses of the sky, the deep recesses and long vistas of gloom mellowed with dim gold, suggest living beings; all things are alive with thought. To be alone at noon day, even in a familiar wood, is a strange experience. In a moment one is taken at unawares by the feeling of a conscious presence. The mind is in contact with the Spirit of Nature.

Before the mystery of Death we have the same sensation. The haunting feeling possesses us that the dead is more alive than before. Not the something *vanished*, but the something *present*, not what is gone, but what is come, startles. The still face of the dead wears an expression of deep peace, as if it were holding communion with unseen beings; the person we had known seems sunk in some profound revery which we dread to break and speak low lest we disturb. The chamber of death is a populous shrine. I never believe so humbly in immortality as I do when standing beside a grave.

The same experience attends the mystery of Birth. The newly born infant seems to bring peopled clouds of glory with it into the world. The secret of life, *where is it?* The secret of consciousness, who shall

outset - in, witness of the spirit in the body  
in the body

reveal it? If it should ever be discovered, the wonder of its manifestation will never cease. A few hours ago it was not, now it is. A hush pervades the room where the new born baby lies; speech is low in whispers, as if somebody overheard.

Reverence, in its lower forms, is superstition. Ignorance makes the awe settle about places, and hours, and things; fear makes men hide behind images and creep into caves; signs and sounds are significant; names are holy; there is a charm of potency in movements and occurrences. There were Jews who would not tread on a piece of white paper for the name of God might be written upon it. In the ancient city of Prague, in Bohemia, is a venerable synagogue, the walls whereof, so tradition says, have not been cleaned for several hundred years because the word Jehovah is supposed to be written somewhere upon them, and the cleaning would rub it off. No one may enter the mosque of St. Sophia till he has put off the shoes from his feet. But, in the building of the vast houses of worship that astonish us in Europe and Asia, how much pure veneration has been expended! "It is to a high and happy exaltation," says John Ruskin, "that we owe those fair fronts of variegated mosaic, charged with wild fancies and dark hosts of imagery thicker and quainter than ever filled the depth of mid-summer dream;

those vaulted gates, trellised with close leaves ; those window labyrinths of twisted tracery and starry light ; those misty masses of multitudinous pinnacle and diademed tower ; the only witnesses, perhaps, that remain to us of the faith and fear of nations. All else for which the builders sacrificed has passed away, all their living interests, and aims, and achievements. We know not for what they labored, and we see no evidence of their reward. Victory, wealth, authority, happiness, all have departed, though bought by many a bitter sacrifice. But of them, and their life, and their toil upon the earth, one reward, one evidence is left to us in those gray heaps of deep-wrought stone. They have taken with them to the grave their powers, their honors, and their errors ; but they have left us their adoration."

Even false religions of wide prevalence and long permanence, have about them the savor of a veneration that hushes irreverence. Ancient customs and rites that look barbarous and bloody had originally, it is probable, a meaning that we should respect if we knew it. The altars on which human victims were slaughtered, were erected in the sentiment or sacrifice, which taught people to offer the dearest things they had to that which should be dearer than all. For my part, I can never without a feeling of *tender* awe visit any spot, or touch any object, of

listen to any form of words consecrated by human reverence, for human reverence is noble though the object of it be mean. But I never lay down such object, or leave such spot, or ponder over such form of words without poignant regret that so sublime an emotion should be condemned to base uses.

Goethe describes three reverences:—Reverence for that which is above us—the ideal; reverence for that which is around us—the human; reverence for that which is below us—the bestial. The essence is the same in all three, but the first is easy; to revere what to our minds is pure perfectness is natural, and as it were unavoidable; to revere the same qualities in the human form is difficult, for there they are veiled, disguised and masked behind features usually inexpressive, often repulsive; to revere the same qualities in brutes is harder still, for there they are concealed beneath the bestial condition, and appeal to us through our pity. Yet to see the spirit of wisdom and goodness here shows the higher faith and the deeper discernment. An ideal may fascinate and impress the thoughtless; there must be human sympathy to appreciate what is deepest and best in men and women; to reach the spirit of worth in beings beneath us in greatness or excellence requires a single, sincere and profoundly sensitive spirit.

Goethe's three reverences may be balanced by



three irreverences, which it may be well to estimate at their real value; the irreverence of the sensual; the irreverence of the knowing; the irreverence of the pious.

1. The irreverence of the sensual. It is open, coarse and offensive. It is the profanity of the streets, the blasphemy of the low-lived and vicious. It is certainly disgusting enough to the refined taste, but it is less impious than it sounds. The people who indulge in loud and frequent oaths do it for the most part thoughtlessly, — actually without comprehension, or suspicion of the nature of them. They do not know the meaning of the language they use, nor do they associate it with admirable persons or worthy things. "God" is a term oftenest in the mouths of people who repel them by their solemn faces and sanctimonious manners. "Jesus" is a name spoken in places they never frequent. "Heaven" and "hell" are words suggestive of goblin terrors they despise, or of sentimental joys they laugh at. They are too ignorant to be blasphemous. No one can insult divinity who has not some conception of divinity, and the vulgar swearer has none. What he honestly reveres, if there be such a thing, he speaks of respectfully. The goodness that he recognizes he will not ill-treat. For the common profanity of men the pious people of the community are

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responsible to a larger degree than they suspect. For by using words without meaning they have dishonored them. Only great people are entitled to employ great language. Only good people are entitled to employ the language that the good have fashioned and consecrated. When small people use great words they belittle them ; when base people use sacred words they dishonor them. Then the audacious and free mouthed catch them up and toss them about as "spoiled phraseology," which has been so dragged in the mire of hypocrisy that no ordinary smirching they are likely to receive, will do them harm. If the words of religion were employed circumspectly and delicately by believers, they would be spoken more respectfully by unbelievers. Profanity is often the response that recklessness makes to hypocrisy. The irreverence is on the part of those who in the first instance take great names in vain. There are prayers more profane than any prayerlessness, and confessions more blasphemous than any denials.

2. The irreverence of the knowing is of another cast. It is the fashion with people who talk glibly and enthusiastically of science to speak disrespectfully of religion, and of religious people. Piety they hold in suspicion, either a fraud or an illusion, perhaps a little of both. Worship is sentimental ; and senti-

mentality merits contempt. Politeness may conceal the scorn, policy may dissemble, but at bottom the disrespect is undeniable. The word "God" stands for no reality, except with the superstitious; the word "Christ" is good only in the vocabulary of priests and parsons; heaven and hell are serviceable fictions which the wise despise along with those that employ them; sacred books and usages, sacred times and places, they leave to the foolish. Why do you always read bible on Sunday? said one of these sapient ones. Why not read occasionally from Darwin or Tom Paine? It gives pleasure to this order of minds to flout sacred things with wink and innuendo, and let it be understood that when people are wiser, as wise as they are, for instance, these childish matters will be outgrown. It is their delight to pull faiths to pieces, to resolve them into the cheapest elements, and show them to be beneath the regard of intelligent people. All religions they condemn alike; religion itself even in its purest form, as the offspring of ignorance on one side and imposition on the other. They see fanaticism in its sentiments, folly in its ideas, and mummery in its rites. They speak of the Bible only to show that it is a farrago of nonsense, and of the church only to declare that it is an incubus and a tyranny.

This is the irreverence of the *knowing*; I am careful not to say the *scientific*, for the truly scientific are not irreverent. They seek knowledge, and they know that knowledge is boundless; they love truth, and are kept in an attitude of humble aspiration as they remember that truth is infinite and absolute while they are relative and finite. They search after the secret of creation, a secret that constantly eludes and baffles them, and brings them to their knees. There is a world of reverence to me in Herbert Spencer's conception of God as the unknowable; his veneration not permitting him to entrust the Ideal he worships to the mauling hands of theologians, or the mumbling lips of devotees, or even to the clumsy manipulations of the thick fingered faculties of men, but compelling him to thrust it away beyond the reach of mind, where it can be secure against profanation, and where the eye of faith may behold it in unsullied beauty,—a God to whom it were idle to build an altar, or insult by vain petitions.

It is even conceivable that atheism may evince a profounder veneration than theism for the ideal Wisdom and Goodness. If there be an atheist who is an atheist because none of the conceptions that men entertain of the perfect Being fill out the measure of his thought or do justice to his vision,

because some of the personifications are absurd, and others revolting, and all inadequate, then in such a case veneration is the mother of atheism. He denies because his soul believes. We read Mill's arraignment of theism with profound respect. For his argument is that the world is too bad, the order of things too confused, the spirit of things too pitiless, the end and purpose of things too dim and unsatisfactory, for the rule and care of a being whom *we might call* wise or good. It is an insult to the perfect one to impute to him the qualities exhibited by the universe in which we live. To hold him answerable for poverty that has no remedy and no compensation, for suffering that has no explanation, for sorrows that cannot be justified, and iniquities that cannot be covered, is, simply, in his opinion, to deny his attributes altogether; and to invent excuses for him, to make believe that things are not so bad as they seem, to palliate enormities that stare us in the face, and to trump up possible aims and purposes which there is not a shadow of a reason for believing to be real ones; in a word to shield him behind a screen of ingenious fabrications that are no better than lies, is only to make the insult more outrageous. A God who can tolerate this, certainly is not the God he is willing to worship. This interpretation can be safely put on Mill's position, for we



know, by his writings that he was an earnest man—whose intellectual and moral ideal was of the highest kind; we know that his conception of justice was of the grandest, and that his efforts to recommend it to his fellow-men were incessant. But the irreverence of really scientific men is of the same stamp. It is veneration in disguise.

3. We come now to the third species of irreverence. The first two when examined appear to be no genuine irreverence at all; the first because there is no spiritual idea to be offended by the thought; the second, because the idea is too high to be offended by the thought. The third, I have named the irreverence of piety. The characteristic of this irreverence is that it uses great thoughts in mean ways, and does wrong to divine things by what it calls zeal for their honor.

Two or three examples will best make this clear. We will take first the idea of God—the central idea of religion, about which all veneration gathers. All reverence depends on the honor paid to this idea, on the clearness of its interpretation and the sweetness of its presentation as well. It is not enough that it be grandly entertained, it must be grandly used. The idea of God set forth by the popular theology is susceptible of the finest interpretations; and it has received them at the hands of the most en-

lightened teachers of the church. The doctrine of Trinity, of Incarnation, of Grace, of Forgiveness, when regarded from the inside and explained according to their best intention, contain thoughts of deity as just and beautiful as men need entertain. I have no sympathy with the disposition that would make caricatures of them, and present the caricature as the doctrine. Liberals have sinned in that way, and grievously too. The doctrines are not as absurd as they appear on the face to be. But it requires an enlightened and spiritual mind to comprehend them. When such a mind presents them they are luminous with beauty. When minds narrow and dogmatic present them, they become grotesque caricatures such as no infidel could improve on. The great thought shrivels to the dimensions of a nut shell. The universe becomes a baby-house, God a wire puller, the angels and men marionettes, providence a shrewd business arrangement, and the "drama of redemption" a piece for private theatricals. It is disheartening to see a creed that Augustine conceived, that Bushnell glorified, that Maurice made humane, that imaginative souls have filled with boundless aspiration and love, travestied by ignorant men who use it to produce sudden effects on sensitive minds. The "evangelists" of the hippodrome profess the same *articles of belief* that the great and good Dr. Bushnell

taught, who has just gone to his rest. It is hard to credit it, but it is so. The same beliefs, and yet so different the spirit in which they are entertained as in effect to be different systems. The "evangelists" make no secret of their theology, and they seem insensible to the lowness of spiritual tone they are producing. They take the mystic truths, deep, speculative, wonderful, which poets, and theologians who were the greatest of poets, used as helps in their explorations of the celestial secrets, and use them as blocks to build children's houses with.

The power in the word God is in its sway over the imagination. To make it thus mighty it must be divested of all cheap, tawdry and incidental associations. Not by clothing God in human attributes, but by stripping him of human attributes; not by ascribing to him the thoughts and feelings of men, but by putting him beyond the reach of all such, we show him reverence. Not by interpreting his wisdom, or goodness by our own, but by celebrating them as so completely distancing our own that we have no conception what they may be, we surround them with the power of awe. This is expressed in an often quoted passage from a celebrated English divine: "It is indeed dangerous for the feeble brain of man to wade far into the doings of the most High, whom although to know be life, and joy to

make mention of his name, yet our soundest knowledge is to know that we know Him not, as indeed He is, neither can know Him, and that our safest eloquence concerning Him is our silence, whereby we confess without confession, that his glory is inexplicable, his greatness beyond our capacity and reach.?" The reverential tone of that sentence all feel. Any unlettered crowd would be hushed by it. There is the might of awe in every word. The humility attests the veneration..

Charles Bradlaugh, the atheist, lay sick, as he thought to death, in a small chamber in a New York hotel, thousands of miles away from his home, and from the friends who were used to help him in his needs. In that hour he reviewed his life, set before him past and future, and found his mind elastic and quiet, with a peace serene as any christian's. This he told me in entire simplicity, in a tone so touchingly sincere that I felt an awe come over me such as men feel in holy places. The spirit of a profound veneration was in the man, a veneration for truth that lost itself in mystery. If Charles Bradlaugh could have told that experience, with what it imported, to the immense audience that listened in my hearing to the loud voiced, garrulous and gossiping "evangelist," the noble reticence would have brought *a hush* upon their spirits such as the spiritual eaves-dropper quite failed to produce.

Dr. Channing read a hymn—

Poor are the charms and faint the rays  
The brightest creatures boast,  
And all their grandeur and their praise  
Are in thy presence lost.

The profound emotion with which the last two lines were pronounced, marking the contrast between the human grandeur and praise and the divine presence, was something never to be forgotten. The soul of reverence was in the tones. No affected familiarity with the mind of the Most High could ever make such an impression.

The evil of Piety is that it destroys reverence by familiarity. The "evangelist" has no doubts, no misgivings. He knows more about God than he does about his nearest friend. He is better acquainted with the ways of Providence than with the habits of his next door neighbor. He can tell you everything—why you are poor or sick; why your business failed; why your child died; why your son fell under temptation and was ruined; why this vessel was wrecked and the other one carried in safety to its destination; why terror fell on the hosts of Saul and it was left to David to slay with a pebble from the brook the giant who terrified all Israel; why Samson needed only the jaw bone of an ass to put the Philistines to rout; why the walls of Jericho that were unassailable by the engines of war fell down at the



blowing of rams' horns by the priests; and will prove to you from Scripture that God deliberately proposed and ordained these doings in order that He might have all the glory and men might have none. He can tell what God's secret purpose was in the selling of Joseph, in the slaughter of the Canaanites, finding some very human passion at work in the divine breast, jealousy, anger, ambition or pride which would disgrace and condemn a mortal, but is supposed to honor and exalt a God. He will make you believe that power justifies policies that in weakness would be dastardly. In a word he treats Deity as the politician treats the successful candidate whose election he has secured.

It is idle to say that it is not he that does this but God, who bids him do it in his Word; that he but repeats what Deity has asserted; and that what would be blasphemous if delivered as his own thought, ceases to be such when said on the authority of revelation. For in precisely this consists the irreverence—in supposing that such things could be given by revelation; in accepting such an idea of revelation; in making God loquacious and chatty about his purposes and feelings. The solemnity of revelation consists in the background of reserve—the reticence. “It is the glory of God,” says an old scripture, “to concea a thing.” Revelation is the

lifting of a curtain that, as a rule, *hangs down, veiling the Holy of Holies from common gaze*. If the veil were always lifted; if there were no veil there, there could be no revelation. Speech implies a silence that is broken. It is the holy silence that is impressive, not the speech.

Revelation, therefore, owes its dignity as much to what it does not communicate as to what it does. It is undignified to have no secrets. Never to speak at all is more awe inspiring than to prattle incessantly. A being who respected himself no more than to tell us all he thinks, even all he thinks about us, would be much less than adorable. A chattering man is despicable; and what shall we think of a babbling God?

The moments when the curtain is lifted but a little way are great moments; moments of midnight contemplation; moments on the mountain top, when the person is alone. So it has always been thought; and when the curtain is lifted at the corner, what is revealed is not the whole contents of the divine mind; the single penetrating beam that lights up *our* perplexity, throws him into deeper shadow.

Nor does it avail to say that common minds are most impressed by familiarity. It is precisely the common minds that are not. With them especially the

proverb is true, that "familiarity breeds contempt." The greatness that withdraws itself; the majesty that shrouds itself in mystery; the holiness that is not seen, but imagined, commands their veneration. The veiled prophet fascinates and awes. The truth is that one must needs be deeply respected to be hourly listened to. Gossip undermines estimation. The "evangelists" will do harm among the uneducated, by *letting down* Deity to the level of their own ideas. The conception of God is in danger of being vulgarized, an event by no means to be contemplated without anxiety. On the grandeur and purity of that conception we depend for a large part of our influence in educating the sentiments of men and women; and as I listened to the "evangelists'" interpretations of Providence, my feeling was that nothing but excessive obtuseness or excessive veneration could prevent serious injury to the religious nature. The obtuse, having no veneration, could lose none; the spiritual, having a rooted veneration, were in no peril of having it overturned.

The same irreverence characterizes the language of piety respecting Prayer. Prayer is a mystery. To argue about it, explain it, make a doctrine of it, urge it as a habit, inculcate it as a practice, is to discredit it. Think of using the privilege of spiritual communion with the Supreme for the purpose of obtaining

admission to a great supper ! To solicit favors of the Great Friend, to ask for good things of any description for private satisfaction, is to insult the kindness that ought to be taken for granted. The man who is prayerless because he would consider it an impertinence to intrude his petty wishes on the Highest, is more reverential than the man who tells God all he wants, as if God had nothing better to do than to listen to his complaints, and no more respect for his own judgment than to pay heed to them. The disagreeable shock caused to me by the "evangelist's" prayer, I am sure was not occasioned by its offensiveness to a sensitive taste ; it was due to the downright irreverence of the thought, to the profanation of the sentiment. The Deity was addressed as if he were a wilful, morbid, petulant fractious being who must be flattered and plaintively entreated before he would bestow his gifts. The validity of the wishes, the propriety of the requests were not even submitted to him, they were assumed. There was not a modest "if" in all the supplications. The Divine Mind was not even formally consulted. To the Supreme Will nothing was left open. No hush of solemnity was felt during the mechanical performance. How could there have been ? It was a business procedure, —evidently, from the attitude of the assembly, so regarded. I thought of the descriptions given of

prayer as the pulling of a rope in the belfry, that rings a bell in heaven ; as the presentation of a draft on the heavenly exchequer, which is sure to be honored if endorsed by Jesus Christ. The intrusion of mortal wishes, many of them ill considered and merely verbal, made the Divine Will seem almost contemptible in its secondariness. A single earnest voice imploring "Thy will be done !" would have rebuked the profanity, and restored divinity to its place in the veneration of the assembly. That is the essence of all prayer. That is the prayer that is never unanswered, the prayer that is never offered except in humility, and the response whereto is always strengthening and consoling. That cannot be uttered too often : if uttered every moment it would but deepen our awe of the Majesty to which we owe obedience, and love of the goodness on which we depend. "Do you ever pray?" asked Frederica Bremer, of a friend? "I revere God too much," was the answer.

In speaking of the Bible, we notice the same irreverence. The true grandeur of the book is not recognized—no distinction is made between its significant and its insignificant parts ; texts are misused ; myths and fables are confounded with facts ; rude legends are thrust forward as pieces of divine biography ; inspiration, expiration, perspiration, are put *in the same category* and treated with equal consid-



eration ; wisdom and foolishness are all one Word ; and it is read with the sharp precision of a book of statistics. No literature will keep its sanctity under such treatment. Had the world's Scriptures been so handled by the nations, we should by this time have lost them. There is more reverence in the practice of the Church of Rome, which withheld the Bible from people who could only abuse it, than there is in this flippant turning over of its leaves to prove dogmatic points. To *call* the Bible the Word of God, will not convince men that it is. To call it so and treat it as if it were other, is to convince men that it is not.

We must save the deepest books from profanation for they cannot be spared. The people who never read the Bible, who regard it as a book they do not comprehend, are not interested in, nor concerned about, really do it less injury than they do who use it with such rude familiarity. For they at least let it alone, as they do other literature that is above them. Their neglect is not of necessity disrespect. There is probably as much disrespect for the Bible in the disposition to keep it in the common schools for daily reading, as there is in the determination to take it out, perhaps more. For many of those who would take it out wish to save it from the daily affront of a reading that is mechanical, and

a listening, that if it be listening at all, is stupid or frivolous.

The soul of religion is reverence. For one I have no faith in a revival of religion that encourages irreverence under any pretext. It is not the fashion to over much respect sanctities. It is rather the fashion to reduce them to the ordinary level of regard, to diminish their number and cheapen their value. The desirable thing is an education in reverence by the restoration of sanctity to things really sacred, and the infusion of it into things commonly regarded as secular or profane; and the education in reverence that is needed must come with the increase of knowledge. The new doctrine will be the child of light. Science will help it by disclosing the wondrous constitution of the living universe. History will help it by unfolding the order of events in the experience of nations. Biography will help it by drawing forth the grandeur of human character; Literature will help it by revealing the capacities of the human mind. To these the new Faith looks for the increase of its veneration. When the clouds of superstition are dispersed, the intellectual heavens will declare the Glory of God.

## RIGHTS AND DUTIES.

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One of the catch words of our generation is the word Rights. It is used in all relations, on all occasions. It is the word that every kind of man thinks to charm by. Rights of the person, rights of property, rights of capital, rights of labor, rights to the use and fruits of the earth, rights to the due share of the products of civilization, rights of thought and rights of speech, rights of belief and rights of worship, rights of criminals, rights of women and children, rights of the outcast and disfranchised, rights of aliens and idiots. The newspapers repeat the cry ; books discuss the idea. The word is coupled with another equally potent and prevailing—the word Individuality. The claims of individuality are pushed to the extreme limits of antinomianism. The achievement of individuality is regarded as the triumph of the modern principle as contrasted with

the principle of a former age. It is demanded that every human being shall take a road of his own ; that every mind shall think, investigate and conclude for itself ; that every soul shall repel dictation and tyranny, no matter from what source they come ; that as no two persons are alike in the whole world, the effort to develop the unlikeness is of paramount importance ; that eccentricity—flying off the centre—is an indication of greatness, that the disintegration of society, the resolution of mankind into independent atoms, will be the consummation of civilized man.

This idea of the sacredness of Individuality and of the rights pertaining to it, is commonly regarded as being new and peculiar to our social system, as contrasted with that of the "old world," where individuality was not respected or considered ; in an age when men were not inappropriately called "the masses" ; when creeds were appointed, institutions fixed, and customs for the multitude prescribed by the few. And the increase of individuality, the recognition of its principle and the spread of its law, is held to be a sign that the social order of the future is on the advance. There is plausibility in this argument, and stimulating power in the appeal. Into the conception of the perfect society the idea of a completed individuality, with full development of *faculty*, and full enjoyment of privilege, enters as a



necessary feature. But this new-world millennium is as far off as the old one, and to insist on individuality to-day is no more reasonable than to insist on the absolute resignation of it commended in the Gospel. More unreasonable, if anything: for the doctrine of individuality as crudely presented, threatens destruction to the social fabric which gives to true individuality its root and sanction. The crude doctrine of individuality is allied to the very system it seems to abhor.

For there is another aspect of this question that is worth considering. It may be contended, and fairly too, that the increase of individuality in the extreme form recommended now by the apostles of human rights, is rather the end and final result of an old system than the beginning of a new one; rather an evidence that the past regime is running out than that the regime of the future is coming in; and that the change for the better will be felt when the word "Rights" shall be replaced by the word "Duties," and the law of individuality shall be succeeded by the law of society. Let us look at this.

In religion the central idea has been the conception of God. Consider now the complexion of that idea. God is a SOVEREIGN. Thus he is regarded in the popular religions—Romanist and Protestant;—a Sovereign,—to be adored, worshipped, waited on as



the *Suprême Being*, from whom all things come and to whom all things belong;—a personal, individual being, limited, bounded, natural; the maker, ruler, lord of the world, dispenser of goods, caretaker; of definite designs and arbitrary purpose, and uncontrolled will; jealous of his authority, tenacious of his dignity, terrible in his wrath; law of right to himself; not to be questioned; consigning people to heaven or hell, according to his private and irresistible decree; withholding or bestowing his spirit; accepting, rejecting, hardening, softening, abandoning, saving; possessed of inalienable and indisputable rights to homage and sacrifice; claiming of all their dues, their all, the tenth of the field, the flock, the income, the first fruits of mind, conscience and spirit; resenting all infringement of his claim; punishing the backsliders and recusants, wreaking vengeance on the worshippers of other gods, heating fires for heretics and infidels who neglect to pay him duty; giving over to reprobation the indifferent and heedless, and keeping horrors on horrors in store for the blasphemous who take his name in vain.

This is the central idea of the popular religion, the leading conception of a great portion of the Bible, the crowning dogma of the Church of Rome, the alpha and omega of the preachers and prayers of the hippodrome. Individuality is enthroned in the

heavens ; indefeasible rights are conceded to a single Lord ; indefeasible rights conceded, no duties exacted. He is to have everything ; he is to be deprived of nothing. What he gives is pure favor. " The inhabitants of the earth are as grasshoppers." In this idea Individuality is raised to the highest power. The doctrine of Rights receives the fullest possible expression, is fortified by every sanction, is crowned with celestial glory.

This Being has officers, representatives. The representative is the Priest. The Priest, in the name of God, claims veneration, according to his rank. As a piece of Godhead, he has a peculiar place and claim. His individuality must be respected ; his rights must be conceded ; he must be waited on, maintained, clothed with dignity, protected, treated as a privileged person, exempted from law and duty and the pressure of service. He must have the best of food, the softest of raiment ; all the orders of men, soldiers, toilers, men of wealth, must confess themselves his subjects. He is jealous of his prerogative as being divine. He must not be challenged or questioned. To treat him as a man is to affront the majesty of heaven.

But the priest is not one man ; he is an order. He is a priesthood numbering hundreds, thousands. They are of all grades and distinctions ; but the

inferior orders share the privileges of the superior. All are sacred persons ; the least is a representative of God. The smallest is above the highest of earth.

The priesthood is abolished, but the sacred individuality is thereby distributed not destroyed. Protestantism has no priesthood. The whole combined sanctity of the priesthood is committed to the Christ, who is the individual of individuals, and to whom all rights belong. His representatives are not called priests, but apostles, overseers, bishops, preachers. To these, however, the privilege is extended. They are regarded as holy persons, set apart for honor and service. To the extreme verge of Protestantism the holy individuality is recognized, among Unitarians even, who mark the point at which Protestantism tapers off, and the christian idea reaches its last attenuation. Nay, so stubborn is the old prejudice, so ineradicable the ancient spirit, that among people who have left Protestantism and Christianity altogether, and ranged themselves against them, the same demand for special rights and privileges is made on the part of those who, after their own fashion, represent the religious idea. The mere fact of holding beliefs on religious matters, even though they be irreligious beliefs, seems to entitle the holder, in his own estimation, to the *privilege of a peculiar recognition*. His right of think-



ing must be more frankly conceded, his rights of speech must be more solemnly guaranteed. The "infidel" who flouts all religion, stands up for his prerogative to abuse believers in God as much as he pleases, without being called to account for it by good manners.

Thus it is in religion. In the secular sphere there is a similar story to tell. The central figure in the ancient state is the Monarch. He corresponds in all respects with God in the church, calls himself in fact the vicegerent of God, claims divine right to rule. He is Lord, the other inhabitants of the realm are subjects. He is the source of right, the fountain of law. His will decides equity. He deprives people of their property, has a lien on their children, draughts them into armies levied to defend his prerogative. What he permits is permitted; what he forbids is forbidden. The King has his vicegerents and representatives, princes, dukes, earls, lords, nobles; the rank shades off into numerous but definite degrees, still the primal sanction accompanies the distribution; every officer and functionary is in some way set apart from the multitude, and made an individual with peculiar rights which must be respected. The very turnkey is an individual; the hangman is a person. The divinity that hedges the king fringes the king's meanest servitor.

The king disappears, and with him the duke, the earl, the lord, the noble of high and low degree. The kingdom gives way to the republic; but the aroma of the kingship hangs about the officials of democracy; mayor and alderman are not as others are. The envy that was squandered on prince and baron is lavished on president and senator. The claim to privilege on one side, the desire for privilege on the other, continue. To be set apart, placed above the herd is the ambition of the multitude. The era of the people succeeds the era of the monarch, but the ancient, sacred prestige of individuality loses none of its power to charm. The solitary pope becomes a million, but every one of the million claims infallibility. The absolute monarch becomes fifty millions, but each one of the fifty millions feels his dignity and calls somebody else subject. Class after class as it ascends to the seat of power strikes the attitude of sovereignty, and looks down on the classes that have not stepped so high. The mighty in arms put forth their claim to privilege; the mighty in council put forth theirs; the mighty in wealth put forth theirs; the mighty in learning put forth theirs. The higher class of laborers come up, and we hear of the rights of inventors, discoverers, designers, authors, journalists. The lower laborers have their opportunity, and we hear



the rights of industry proclaimed by working mens' conventions; woman raises her head and challenges her rights of property and person, of civil and political power. The titles are distributed; the privileges extended; and as one order after another mounts the seat of dignity, new thrones and insignia must be prepared. Each fresh group of individuals demands a fresh group of subjects to bring tribute. Servants look down on servants; menials hold the head high above menials. None is so low that none are lower; none so abject that he has no heel on the neck of another more abject still. The rudest white laborer despises the black. In the days of slavery, the negro of the North ranked himself above the negro of the South; the slave of the rich master looked with pity on the slave of the poor master; and the slave of the poor master scorned the white man who could not afford to keep slaves at all.

Thus individuality is handed down from age to age and passed along from one system to another. The principle of it remains the same under every form and aspect. It is simply compressed in the first instance, and attenuated in the last. But so acrid is the virus of the principle, that it acts with dynamic force. The last attenuation retains all the power of the original drug. Nay, the power seems to increase with the dilution. The animus of the

last "come-outer" in religion towards those who do not accept his theories, whether orthodox or heterodox, is even more fierce and bitter than that of the pope of Rome; the high mettled contempt of the "pot-house politician" towards the gin shop constituency he turns about his finger, is something that Prince Bismarck has no conception of. No monarch ever asserted the divine rights of his Kingliness more absolutely than the latest apostle of individualism does his. No high priest ever pronounced an anathema on heretics with more confidence than the "infidel" editor does on people who are not enlightened enough to be "materialists" or "atheists."

This is not beautiful. It is not promising for the future. At present individuality looks like universal arrogance. Envy and jealousy carried into every relation and department of existence. The word "Rights" is suggestive of restlessness, discontent, endless contention, ceaseless ambition, struggle for place and power merely for the prestige they confer, and the private privileges they procure. The idea of rights, the assertion of rights, the effort to obtain rights, signify the passion for superiority and precedence. As the mass of rock when broken into fragments by the stroke of the hammer, or the blast of powder, throws the pieces of stone into the air, threatening destruction of life, so the resolution of

society into individuals is attended by self assertion, self justification, aggressiveness, that endanger the interior humanities. The proclamation of rights in church or state provokes counter proclamation; manifesto answers to manifesto, protest to protest; the latent will-power is manifested in anger and petulance; discord breaks out in families; ties are broken; alienation takes the place of sympathy. Individualism means rivalry and dismemberment; it may mean bitterness, malignity, and blood. It cannot be forgotten that people are never so ungracious, so ungenerous, so unjust, so altogether unlovely, as when they are contending for their rights; that the cruellest things have been done by people who claimed simply their rights; that wars between nations, and quarrels between cities and states, have had no other pretext than that of maintaining vested or natural rights; that it was in the name of their rights, that our civil war was justified by the people who led us into it; that the greatest wars of history have had no other. Push the claim of rights to its extreme,—and the extreme of a principle is simply the essential principle,—and society would be fairly dissolved into its elements and the gains we have made in the past would be forfeited. Some of the rights openly demanded by men and women from the platform and through the press would, if granted, so erect whim, caprice, passion,



into law that the bonds of organic cohesion would be loosened, and the continuity of the race would be arrested.

If this analysis be correct, then individualism, instead of being the first step in a new order, is the last step in an old one; the final conclusion and exposure of a principle that was vicious at the start.

In order to make this clearer, let us begin with another principle, and trace the consequences of this as we have done of the former. Let us start from a new point of departure, a new primary idea. It shall again be the idea of God. We will say that God is not Creator but Father; not monarch but minister; not sovereign, but servant; not a solitary independent Being, but a social, related, sympathetic Being; not the world's ruler, but the world's inspirer; not a King holding court outside of the universe, but a friendly life making a home within it; not an awful potentate, austere and exacting, with a Peter at his garden gate scrutinizing credentials, and admitting elect souls one by one, but a generous giver, going out to refresh and invigorate mankind, anticipating acts of homage by acts of grace, keeping in advance of men, and preventing their needs; gathering them in, loading them with benefits before they have a chance to return thanks, overwhelming them with service before they can think of tendering vows; asking

nothing, offering everything ; not the Lord of creation but the humblest servant in creation ; not bidding his menials wait on him while he eats his supper, and then returning them no thanks on the ground that they had simply done their duty, but calling them in from their noonday toil, from high-way and by-way, spreading their table with wholesome food, and waiting on them while they eat.

This is the conception of the Supreme that Jesus announced in the form of sentiment, and that modern science demonstrates in the form of knowledge. The one good thing science is doing for us in this regard, is the taking away the divine personality, destroying the idea that God is an individual, demolishing his throne, dispersing his court, consigning his crown and sceptre to the limbo of useless machinery, rendering futile all attempts to glorify him, and administering the withering rebuke that is pronounced on the absurd, upon those who make intercession with his majesty for themselves or their neighbors. To represent God as unknowable is, at least, to rescue mankind from the abasement of what they call their worship.

Starting from this idea, we arrive at an entirely new order of results. The word "Rights" is dropped and the word "Duties" is enunciated in its stead ; not as a sad, lonely word, but as a word full



of cheer, and instinct with joyous life. If the Supreme does not stand on his individuality, who shall venture to? If the Supreme claims no rights, who shall dare to mention them? Under this conception, the priest instead of standing aloof and passing up the gifts of mortals to the throne, puts off everything that distinguishes him from his fellows, and becomes a communicator of humane influences; comes as near to them as possible, and does his best to erase the consciousness of distance between them and heaven; reminds them of their essential humanity, rebukes their moaning over their sins, their sense of absence and separation, and bids them come back to a sense of their worth. Under the old dispensation the "Evangelist" is grateful for every confession of sin. Under the new he will be grateful for every confession of goodness. Jesus said: "There shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." The "evangelist" of the hippodrome imagines the angels rejoicing because one of a vast audience stands up and avows the belief that he is lost!

Under the better conception, the king no longer is a ruler: he is an administrator. Administration takes the place of Government. The function of those who are called to preside over the concerns of *a people*, whatever name they bear, is to provide for

the general interests as far as circumstances will permit, to discharge the trusts committed to them, postponing even the chances of their re-election to the concerns of those who elect them: not making the anomalous thing called a "paternal government," but simply counting others first and themselves last. Power is power to serve; ability is opportunity; wealth is a trust. The great are for the help of the little. This is the idea. It is the cardinal idea of the religion of Jesus—an idea which Christian teachers have held up for two thousand years, but which the Christian Church has never represented.

This is the abstract idea. How shall it become the concrete, the practical? It cannot become so all at once. It can become so gradually only by patient reflection on the idea.

Rights and Duties. What are they but different aspects of the same thing? The same fact under two faces. My rights are your duties; your rights are my duties. Rights and duties balance and define each other. All right makes men tyrants; all duty makes men slaves. None claim everything; none owe everything. There is an absolute reciprocity here. "Others must practise certain fulfilments and forbearances towards me, whether it may be agreeable to them or not: I am *obliged* towards others, and they are in like manner *obliged* towards me: I have

certain rights in regard to others, and they on their part have certain rights in regard to me." So writes George Grote, an apostle of the Utilitarian school of morals. It does not depend on their choice to perform or decline their obligations towards me; nor does it depend on my choice to decline or perform my obligation towards them. Self-regard and regard for others,—these two balance one another in every regulated mind. Too much stress on one side makes men despotic: too much stress on the other makes men servile. To be too much a servant is as bad as to be too much a master. To escape either extreme is hard.

How easy it is to exaggerate rights, we all know. To think of themselves, of their own desires, wants, deprivations and disabilities is the propensity of all mankind. The laborer is painfully aware of his needs. Others have money, he has none; others have work, he is without it. He is a man, with mouth to fill, back to clothe, head to shelter, perhaps, with wife and children for whom he must provide. There is food enough wasted to feed all the hungry. Money enough is spent in debauchery to keep the sick well and support the feeble. The superabundance of the rich, who live like the fowls and the lilies, would give houses to all the outcasts. The air is full of light; they live in darkness. The air is fresh every



morning; they must inhale noxious atmospheres. The poor man has a body, and it is pinched and starved; a mind, and it can get no culture. Brooding over these things his soul is wild with anger. He rebels against destiny; he hates his fellow men; he conspires and plots; he would overthrow society and build up another world on some socialist plan; making himself the pivot on which society turns; his own needs the first things to be considered, his own deficiencies the last; he interprets all the movements of the world as they bear on his concerns, and has no doubt that a pyramid standing on its apex would be a fairer object than a pyramid standing on its base.

But could he look on the obverse side of his right, the side of obligation on the part of others towards him; could he consider that others have their rights which imply obligations on his part towards them; could he bethink himself that, however unfortunate and distressing his condition may be, as others could not remedy it, except on terms that would reduce all to the same condition; could it be borne in upon him that he has obligations, as for example, to respect the order of society, as no man has made it, but as it has come to be,—a sense of duties might take the place of a sense of rights, the duty to do with his might the least thing he found to do,

to meet his own responsibility as manfully as he could, and to submit patiently to the disabilities which the universal order imposed.

So long as society is in the passionate stage, the idea of rights will extinguish the idea of duties. Passion is self-regarding, affection craves. To the lover the whole world is of no consequence by the side of his love. All things are made to further that, all people are bound to countenance it. People are good or bad as they encourage or thwart it. There is a God in heaven if it thrives ; there is no God in heaven if it is crossed. The society in which the lover's desire is accorded full liberty and gratification, is well ordered. The society in which it must conform to conventional rules, is out of joint. What does it matter how people think, when the impulse of the heart desires satisfaction? The lover's complaint of the apathies and antipathies of the world is as old as time. Yet, however urgent his claim to the rights of affection, he could hardly insist on the obligation on others part to lay aside their rights to consideration in order that his may be fulfilled. The conventionalities of society seem unreasonable and absurd to the passionate emotion of any private soul. But those conventionalities represent the combined and balanced rights and obligations of all who compose society. They are the expressed judg-



ment and will of the whole, which no individual may over-ride. The idea that any personal instincts, however lovely and sacred in seeming, have an original and inexplicable source, a divine authority in nature, as being impressed on the mind by nature herself, or by the divine author of nature, and are therefore entitled to satisfaction; that the hunger and thirst of the heart being divinely suggested must be divinely provided for; that the cry of conscience, being made articulate by God, must be listened to; that therefore their claim is imperious; will hardly bear examination. All other appetites, desires, impulses, though an inseparable part of our natural constitution, must be restrained and modified so as to fall into present harmony with duties, or the rights of others. The moral impulses obey the same law. Obligations and rights define and determine each other.

Are there inalienable rights? Not unless there are imperative obligations. Are even the cardinal rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, inalienable? Not unless it can be made to appear obligatory on society to preserve every life from destruction under all conceivable conditions, to secure liberty at all ventures, to ensure the conditions of happy life without regard to qualifications; and surely few will contend for so extreme a doctrine as that. It would release a large portion of the race from the duty of considering any but themselves.

A solitary individual sends from a neighboring town a manifesto setting forth his claims to be elected president of the United States. The pith of his claim is that he thinks he ought to be president ; and the ground of his belief is that in his solitary dwelling, far away from vital communication with his fellow men, sunk in the depth of his own consciousness, he has seemed to himself to be the centre of the nation. His thoughts on labor, finance, land reform, foreign policy, marriage and divorce, church and state, bible in public schools, are the only thoughts worth entertaining ; they fill his own mind, and consequently in his regard, they fill all mind. To him they are first truths, of absolute and unimpeachable validity, of necessary and fatal value : In his judgment the future welfare of the country depends on the swift recognition of their truth. Republican institutions are in the balance and are likely when weighed, to be found wanting, unless these inevitable deductions from first principles are admitted. He speaks in the tones of a prophet, with the pleading pathos of an apostle. It is very absurd ; it is altogether preposterous, but it is scarcely more so than all purely self-regarding claims are. " The world owes me a living." " God owes me satisfaction for the desire he has implanted." But the world gives me a living, a thousand times over, if I would but see it. God offers *heaven daily*, if we would open our eyes.

We know how easy it is to exaggerate the claim to rights. It is equally easy to exaggerate the demand for duty. There are people who dwell on the debts they owe, the rights of others, till they forget that they have any rights of their own. They are oppressed by the consideration of what is done for them. As the revivalist preacher dwells on the believer's obligations to the Saviour till all reasonable relations are distorted, on one side merit piled up heaven high, on the other side demerit enlarged till it becomes infinite, the Saviour's human affections being raised to the angelic power, his pangs multiplied by several thousand million, his bravery enhanced to the self-sacrifice of a deity, the believer's ingratitude, heartlessness, worldliness being over colored in a corresponding degree till he is flung heart and soul at the Redeemer's feet in a state of spiritual exhaustion ;—as the religious exhorter represents his fictitious deity as the embodiment of all moral perfection, who claims the service of the creature as an undoubted right, so the devotee of humanity, forgetting the short comings of his fellow men, their indolence, selfishness, and dishonesty, and remembering only their patient endurance and faithful toil, is ready to disavow all claims, and annihilate all individuality in his philanthropic enthusiasm.

Thus passion conflicts with passion. Fortunately



in the vast majority of mankind, rights and duties equalize each other, the necessities of life compelling a just recognition of both. But in the fewer instances where rights are secured, or duties made imperative, to strike the balance is an education. Emphasis must be laid first on one side, then on the other, as circumstances demand.

Every principle has its double aspect. There are two readings of the "Golden Rule." Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. That is the self-regarding version—the rendering of people who are determined to have their rights. "As you would have them do unto you." That is the keynote: How do you wish people to behave to you? Do they behave to you as you would wish? This brings the question down to plain matter of fact, and sets us to criticising conduct. Do they treat you handsomely, respectfully, kindly? Are they courteous? Then they are entitled to similar treatment in return. The considerations of love and honor may be set aside. There is no call for affection or disinterested service. According to this reading the Golden Rule might be adopted by the courtier as well as by the christian; it might hold a front place in the "Code of Honor." The man of fashion might take it as his motto. Invite me to your party, I will invite you to mine. Lend me money, and when you

come to want, I will lend you money. The consideration goes no deeper than behavior. It touches no principle.

The other rendering introduces another idea. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." There the problem is brought home to the heart. Do you love yourself? People who do not love themselves at all, who have no idea what it may be to love themselves, who have no desire but to be treated well without the least regard to their deservings, may wish to be handsomely dealt by, to be favored and spared ;—but the bare thought of *loving one's self* puts one into sympathetic relations.

In these times of ours the emphasis needs to be laid on the sympathetic side. Duty first, rights afterwards. Instead of urging the rights of labor, is it not worth while to consider the duties of labor—to be faithful, temperate, frugal? Instead of pressing the rights *of* women, there is room for urging the duties of women to occupy so efficiently the places that are open that new and larger ones will be offered. After all, the surest way to the enjoyment of rights is through the performance of duties. They commonly receive what they desire who give what they possess. To make oneself indispensable to another by faithful service, the heartier the better, is to make that other more than willing to concede indis-



pensable things. How swift people are to heap favors on those they hold necessary to them, on their supporters and benefactors! America repays the disinterested service of her Washington by a deathless fame. Christendom cannot sufficiently exalt the prophet who declared that the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister. These are times when it is not unprofitable to remember the central thoughts of sacred books, and the central figures of religious tradition; when it may not be amiss to study the examples of Buddha and the Christ—men who had little to say about their rights and much about their duties; the right to be recognized as truth-speaking, grave, just and kindly men—the duty of convincing others that they were such. These examples have even been held to be divine: men have paid court to them, and burned incense before them, and gone their way, *not* to do likewise. When such as these shall be regarded as human, a new era for humanity will dawn.

## AUTHORITY IN RELIGION.

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READING lately a sketch of the life of a Buddhist pilgrim in Müller's "Chips from a German Workshop," I was impressed anew, as one is at every fresh example of it, by the moral power exerted over the mind by a belief in the authority of religious ideas—of any religious ideas—for the power of one system of ideas seems to be not much greater than that of another, the authority behind them being assumed. The Buddhist pilgrim in question held what most men in our modern world, would consider as the dreariest possible creed. It included no God and no immortality. But there were truths taught by Buddha, he believed, that it was of prime importance to know. They were hard to find. The teachers could not impart them; they were not to be learned in the schools; the sacred books, as they were preserved by the priests, did not contain them in

full or satisfactorily. To find what he sought he must go to the birth-place of Buddha himself, and study the original scriptures of the faith. The journey which was long and perilous, is described at length, with its almost incredible hardships, its perils from hunger, cold, wild beasts, savage men, brutes and tyrants, its excitements and consolations, its triumphant close. The success was due to the sincerity of his faith and the entireness of his consecration, and these he owed to his faith in the authority of the sacred writing of his religion.

This half legendary story comes from India, and is of very great antiquity. In the Germany of our own generation priests and bishops of the Romish Church are displaying an astonishing endurance and courage in the trials to which Prince Bismarck is subjecting them, submitting patiently to fine and imprisonment, rather than abate one jot of their official dignity. The power that sustains them is faith in the authority of the church, which as they imagine, reposes on the Rock of Ages.

At home, in New York, the evangelists of the Hippodrome, labor week after week at the heavy task of reviving an obsolete theological system, and converting souls to a mythological Christ. Though not strictly copies of their Master in all respects, for *they eat the best of food, sleep on the softest of beds,*

live in king's houses, and are on terms of intimacy with the chief Pharisees, and leaders of the Synagogue; their work is severe and disheartening. Their daily preaching, praying and singing, the exhausting toil of the inquiry room, the nervous strain of perpetual exhortation, must make serious demands on perseverance and fortitude. The one thing that strikes the visitor to the celestial race-course is the absolute repose of the men on the authority of their creed, their entire confidence in the Scripture, their unwavering trust in their Christ. There is no doubt in their minds, no misgiving, no disposition to question. They are certain; certain that they are right, that the hundreds of thousands who never try to enter their crowded theatre, and look on their performance as foolish, are wrong. The least weakening of this assurance, the intrusion of the smallest doubt, eating like a worm into the timbers of their ark, would let in the ocean on which they float, and sink them to the bottom. Their whole enterprise would come to a certain end. The tongues would stammer; the songs would cease; the wings of prayer would be folded; the Bible would be closed and neglected.

Were the certainty of their supporters to be shaken, a stroke of paralysis would fall on the evangelical world. The working bands would desist from



their labors ; missionary societies would suspend their operations ; the presses that groan as they print the loads of tracts, would be still ; the thousand chapels would be closed ; the popular administration of religion in all its departments would first languish, then stop.

But this certainty is shaken in the minds of the great majority of people. In the minds of multitudes it never existed. The members of any particular faith, however sure that their faith rests on authority, nay, because they are so certain of this, are equally sure that theirs is the only one that does, that every other is a delusion or an imposture, a superstition or a fraud. Each religion thinks the neighboring religion a lie. The European smiles at the monstrous mythologies which the Asiatic believes to be well attested revelations from heaven. The Asiatic religions hold one another in derision. The Christian calls Mahomet an impostor, speaks with open scorn of the Koran, and wonders how any but children can receive the legends about the prophet as true. The Protestant does not tire of making fun of the mummery of the Church of Rome. The liberal Protestant regards the evangelical system as a tissue of absurdities, with a goodly sprinkling of barbarities intermixed. The Christ of one discredits the Christs of the rest. The philosopher discredits the Christs of *all*, holding that all are about equally deluded, that



the claim to certainty is without evidence, that the boasted authority is imaginary.

The basis of certitude will never bear investigation. The Romanist ascribes the ultimate authority to the Church. But the student of Church history questions the soundness of the foundation. The seat of sovereign power there is hard to find. Is it in the Pope? The Catholic doctors divide on that point. Is it in the Councils? Milman, a churchman, says, "Nowhere is Christianity less attractive than in the councils of the church. It is in general a fierce collision of two rival factions, neither of which will yield, each of which is solemnly pledged against conviction. Intrigue, injustice, violence, decisions on authority alone, and that the authority of a turbulent majority, decisions by wild acclamation rather than after sober inquiry, detract from the reverence and impugn the judgments, at least of the later councils. The close is almost invariably a terrible anathema, in which it is impossible not to discern the tones of human hatred, of arrogant triumph, of rejoicing at the damnation imprecated against the humiliated adversary." Does the authority lie with the conjunction of Pope and council? Then we have two weaknesses conspiring to make a power, two zeros equivalent to infinity, two sources of error combining to make one source of truth.

The "evangelical" Protestant appeals to the authority of the Bible. But an inspired book needs an inspired interpreter: Where is he? An infallible book must have some way to make its infallibility apparent and evident—Where is it? Where is the perfect text or the perfect translation of the perfect text? Where is the unerring and universally accepted expositor? Where is the guarantee for the genuineness of the writing, or for its truth when the genuineness is discovered? The authority of the Bible is a spiritual fiction. A hundred sects appeal to it, making the differences in their interpretation a justification for their separate organizations.

Another class of Protestants attach authority to the creed as explaining Scripture. But the creed has a human history, and a history that is not calculated to deepen regard for it as a summary of divine truth.

Thus authorities crumble, one after another, at the touch of criticism, till at last no authority remains. They who submit to authority commonly set up for themselves the authority to which they will submit. Their Rock of Ages is a platform of human construction.

To many minds this conclusion is disheartening. We have been so long accustomed to reliance on authority, so uniformly in the habit of thinking that au-

thority is necessary, so persistently drilled in the persuasion that there must be only absolute knowledge in religion, that anything short of certainty there is fatal to the highest concerns of man; that, however becoming intellectual humility may be in the presence of other problems, in the presence of these problems of the soul humility is little less than guilt, uncertainty deplorable, and doubt a sin,—that the intelligence of the entire failure of authority to justify itself brings a shock of dismay to our minds. We feel like boats adrift on a stormy sea, with the horrors of the deep all about us.

It will be a long time before people unlearn an old lesson, undo an ancient habit, uncoil their minds from an inveterate twist. When they do, they will discover that the demand for authority is not a demand of human nature, but a wish begotten of education. They will feel that certainty is not indispensable to peace, that in the department of religious beliefs, as in other departments, we may be satisfied with something that comes far short of knowledge. They may even become persuaded that authority is a hindrance rather than a help, that certainty is undesirable, that a condition of positive, unquestioning assurance is more unsafe, that is, more unwholesome, than a condition of inquiry.

Our hearts indulge themselves in passionate

*show danger of authority - 22. and justify*



wishes of every variety which they become persuaded are original needs of human nature, and on the strength of which they advance preposterous claims on Providence. Luxurious, indolent, and pampered, they cherish dreams and demand that heaven shall realize them; fashion hopes, and complain if the future does not positively guarantee their fruition; invent wants, and in imagination construct a universe of means for supplying them. Forgetting that Nature is pledged to satisfy no cravings but those she herself has awakened, to answer no questions but those she herself prompts, to fulfil no destinies but those she herself prefigures, we go on allowing our gaudy fancies to raise expectations that have not a chance of fulfilment. We ask for plum cake, and think ourselves wronged when we receive plain bread; our thirst is for champagne, and we cry when the cup of pure water from the spring is put to our lips.

The cry for what is called the salvation of the soul is one of these artificial clamors. It is a very old cry; it has been uttered by sincere lips; it has been raised by the best hearts; it has been wrung from spirits in their hours of ecstasy and their hours of sorrow; it has been answered by priests and divines in all ages and all churches. Dramas of *Redemption* have been arranged to pacify it; schemes

of salvation have been invented to meet its longing. The scenery of heaven, the drapery of Christ, the accessories of the judgment-day have all been prepared with the purpose to give rest and relief to these imploring spirits. But an honest scrutiny makes evident the fact that the need expressed by the cry is not a deep want of human nature. The sense of sin is by no means universal, it is not even common. So far from being irrepressible, it is inexpressible. The most difficult part of the evangelist's work is to awaken the sense of sin and convince people that they need a Saviour. Of the tens of thousands who crowd the meetings and listen to the appeals, a few hundreds remain in the inquiry room, and the most of these go to get answers to questions they never asked, and comfort for sorrows they never felt, and relief from fears that never tormented them. Not to satisfy a want, but to create a want; not to open the gate of forgiveness, but to persuade people that they must have forgiveness and must pray for it; not to give assurance of the Saviour's love, but to excite a desire for the assurance, is the task. If the need of salvation were felt, the work were quickly accomplished. It is because it is not felt, because souls will not believe they are sunk in sin, because the awful certainty of their doom is not perceived, because, in a word, the entire scheme of



the Evangelists is felt to be an ecclesiastical device, which, however imposing once, has lost its impressiveness, that the movement halts. The preacher cannot awaken concern. The Christ comes only to sinners. But if people will not admit their sinfulness, he cannot come. He will not come uninvited. Thus the fact of the revival is a confession that the doctrinal basis of the religion is gone. If the failure of the revival would be accepted as an admission that the assumed need of the human heart is an artificial and not a genuine one, it will have achieved its best success.

And shall we not say frankly as an inference from this, that the operations which religion carries on, presuming that these spiritual needs are genuine, and that authority to satisfy them is given, may also be discontinued without serious detriment to the best interests of mankind? The missionary enterprises at home and abroad, the chapels and schools, and proselyting arrangements of every kind, sincere and earnest as they are, noble as they are in certain aspects, useful as they are incidentally, are practically outgrowths from the evangelical system. They assume the need of salvation; they imply a sense of sin; they are without meaning, except as they import that all men are essentially depraved—that *their refusal* to confess that they are is the most con-

vincing sign of their depravity ; that their insensibility to the fact of their turpitude is the conclusive evidence of the desperation of their spiritual estate. But if these assumptions are all baseless, then would it not be as well to save the expenditure of wealth, time, labor, genius, will, saintliness, which the operations of the system require? Their languishing may indicate that mankind are discovering the artificial character of the grounds on which they rest, and are losing interest in them accordingly. And if such be the case, mankind are the gainers rather than the losers by their failure. Their diminution can alarm none but those who are committed to a belief in the authority of this particular system of ideas. To others it will be a ground of satisfaction.

Instead therefore of substituting another form of authority in place of the artificial ones that we have discarded, I would rather make it evident that the pretense of authority is mischievous, and that the interests of man will be promoted better when the notion of authority is discarded. Of authority in religion we have had a long experience. Not wholly a deplorable one certainly, for nothing that comes in due course of things is without its compensation, and solaces ; still, an experience we should not be anxious indefinitely to prolong. At present we are in condition to estimate its disadvantages, and to judge them fairly. They are easily presented.

In the first place, it is manifest, on slight consideration, that beliefs accepted on authority soon lose their vitality, if they ever possessed any vitality to lose. Beliefs should be living, natural, and, to a certain degree, spontaneous, in order to be animating and effective. The truest opinions, taken on trust, received without question from parents and teachers, from priests or divines, rest on the surface of the mind, and penetrate but a little way beneath the surface to the place of conviction. They may lie on the surface a great while, for years, for a life time; they may be undisturbed by the current of loose opinions that are met as one goes through the several phases of mental experience. They may harden like a crust, and be transmitted from generation to generation like some peculiarity of bodily structure. They may become so thick as to be impenetrable by knowledge from without, or by doubts and agitations from within. They may in time acquire such solidity that they seem like original structures of nature. They are on the surface of the mind, nevertheless; a casing in which the mind is enclosed; a roof under which the mind is sheltered; a dwelling within which the mind carries on its own affairs, without regard to the architecture, as in Rome one sees a family of beggars living beneath the eaves of a famous temple.



The convictions on which people live are live convictions. All genuine convictions are alive. Opinions may be superficial; dogmas may be incidental; but convictions are a portion of the intellectual constitution. Now conviction is never imparted by authority, and never accepted on authority. If authority imparts a belief, the mind must ratify it before it is entitled to be called a conviction. But the mind is as likely to discard it as to ratify it. Passive minds take beliefs on authority; and to retain the beliefs they must remain passive. The stir of activity is what authority dreads. Every violent agitation of mind has shaken authority, has broken the crust which had formed during the passive intellectual condition that authority encouraged. Every fresh access of conviction has been accompanied by a disturbance of lethargic acquiescence. Beneath the reign of authority men may be honest believers, but they will not be vital ones. Even if they continue to be submissive believers after their minds have started from their slumber, they will be believers of a new pattern. Loyola remained a Catholic after the terrible revulsion of feeling which changed him from a gay cavalier to a soldier of the Cross, but the convulsion was one of feeling; not of intellect. The revolution that took place in Luther was intellectual, and it carried him clean away from

the church where he had been a priest. Modern Christendom believes on authority, and believes so externally that its life runs one way, its thoughts another. Its creed belongs to Sunday, its principles to the week. Its soul remains shut up in the meeting house, its intellect works in the office and the shop. In sentiment it belongs to Christ, in purpose it belongs to the world. It bows its head in confession, it devotes its brain to commerce and politics. It will believe heartily when it believes naturally; and it will believe naturally when it believes freely.

Nor is this all. It is the inevitable effect of authority to arrest mind. When the authority is slight, like that of a parent, which is outgrown in the process of years, or a teacher, which may be set aside by another teacher, or may be supplanted by experience when teachers have ceased to exert influence over the adult mind, the mischief is trifling; indeed there is no practical mischief; the prejudice imposed by authority is about enough to furnish a point of resistance to the growing intellect. Without some opposition to act against and overcome, thought would miss the friction that is necessary to set it in active motion. A mind absolutely unencumbered, entirely without provocation or exasperation, with no barrier of tradition to push against, would in most cases remain dormant. If the theories of some reformers



could be carried out, and children were allowed to grow up wholly unbiassed in their beliefs, their parents acting on the let alone policy so faithfully that even their own convictions were not imparted to their boys and girls, it is probable that no beliefs whatever would be formed, an utter incuriosity would possess the mind of the generation; the intelligence receiving no direction and no stamp, would splay about in the field of speculation, and leave behind it only the trail of the crawling worm. But when the authority is that of a church whereof one may be a member for life, or of a creed that millions profess from youth to age, or of a book which is never superseded by other literatures, the effect is very different. This authority only one in millions can shake off. The others succumb to it, and cease to think. The prince of the intellectual world of Europe for twenty centuries was Aristotle. That powerful, roomy and active intellect actually held the world in awe. To dispute his authority was a kind of blasphemy. To be able to quote his authority was to have on one's side the weight of demonstration. Through the whole of this long period the intellect of Europe fretted away its prodigious force. Its thinking had no issue, its speculation bore no fruits. It simply turned round and round in the same circle of ideas. At last the spell was broken, and the breaking of that spell

ushered in the period known as the Revival of Letters. The monarch was dethroned, and the emancipated mind sprang forward to new conquests. Then men stamped upon him they had revered. The pedestal on which he had been placed as a god was a made pillory on which he was obliged to stand as a mark for insult. As the Arabs, when they have killed a lion, wreak on his harmless corpse the injury their fear prevented them from showing to the living beast, so the people who would have burned the audacious thinker who presumed to question the great master's doctrine, now laughed at him as little better than an impostor.

And this recalls another mischief done by the reliance on authority. When the authority is overthrown it is as unduly dishonored as it had been unduly honored before. There comes a reaction and with it a disposition to despise and spit upon what had been adored. It is a kind of posthumous vengeance that men wreak on the objects they have feared. To desecrate the graves of monarchs who have been allowed to be despots; to burn in effigy the tyrants who can no longer burn bodies; to heap ordure on the memory of popes and prelates who were suspected of receiving more than their share of glory, has been one of the grim pastimes of humanity. *The depth of the disgrace has been in proportion to*

the height of the elevation. The worshipper is answerable for the fanatic. The claim that the bible is supernaturally inspired provokes the charge that it is a book of folly and fable. If piety will insist that it contains no error, that its science is correct, its philosophy unimpeachable, its morality immaculate, impiety will undertake to prove that its science is that of the nursery, its philosophy a tissue of guesses, and its morality worthy only of savages. One extravagance begets the other. The claim put forth for the church that it is a divine institution for the salvation of men provokes the counter assertion that it is a human institution for the oppression of men. The claim put forth for the creed that it presents ultimate and necessary truth respecting the destiny of the race, is met by the declaration that it is an impudent and preposterous attempt to foreclose inquiry into the destiny of the race. The glorification on the one part challenges caricature on the other.

The character of Jesus has suffered from the same treatment. His worshippers have started a legion of accusers. They who have exalted him as Saviour, Redeemer, Deity, have put skeptics on the task of reducing him somewhat below humanity. Renan is the product of Pressense. Because one school asserts his infallibility and absolute sinless-



ness another school finds fault with his teaching, and detects serious flaws in his character. Renan would hardly have pronounced the raising of Lazarus a trick to save Christ's waning reputation, which he himself connived at, had not the christians taken Christ out of the category of humanity and branded as blasphemous every intimation of doubt in regard to his entire perfection. This is a grave evil, and it can be avoided only by withdrawing every extravagance of pretension and resting authority on simple reason.

The satisfaction of feeling that it rests there, and there only, is unspeakable. It is a common impression that they who have cast loose from authority in religion, have set themselves adrift on an open sea of wild conjecture, and are victims of incessant doubt and fear. The impression is a natural one, but it is entirely erroneous. The man who intelligently renounces spiritual authority is emancipated. His mind receives an impulse forward. He is free to seek truth in every direction, and able to recognize it wherever he finds it. He is not limited to one view, or confined to one hope, or tied to one answer to his questions, or shut up within a narrow compass of inquiry,—but at liberty to seek in all quarters, to knock at all doors, to ask of all teachers; no doctrines being branded for him with infamy, he deals

justly with all, without fear and without anger. The feeling of rebellion is taken out of his heart. The intellectual world, instead of being a realm of darkness dotted here and there with points of light, is a world of light contrasted with the realm of ignorance which is dark. To him all questions are open questions; open to answer from many directions. He can be fair to all opinions, generous to all teachers, just to all creeds. He has no bigotry, and no fanaticism. His faith is untainted with superstition, his enthusiasm is unalloyed with partisanship. He has a welcoming word for all sincere inquirers, and he rejoices unfeignedly at every increase in knowledge or respect for knowledge. He is open-minded, which is another way of saying that he is accessible to wisdom.

Is there then no such thing as authority,—no supreme law to which the mind must bow, no allegiance which is imperative on right-minded men? Certainly there is authority, but it is not committed to the keeping of any human institution. Truth is L authority when it is discovered; facts are authority. Every piece of knowledge, or of what is reputed as being knowledge, carries authority with it. Every newly disclosed fact is a gem in the crown of the king to whom all truth-loving minds bow. The authority we ascribe to some great teacher, as Plato, Newton, Bacon, Kant, is due entirely to the truth



they have brought to light. The authority passes from teacher to teacher, as they succeed and supersede one another. The prophet is not master, but the wisdom that shines in the prophet. The magians bend at the stable door over which stands the star. It is the star they follow. The men of each generation cite as "authority" the wise of their generation. Another generation brings other wise men, and to them allegiance is transferred, as to those who best know. In every instance the loyalty is paid to the knowledge, not to the knower. The knower is incidental, the knowledge is eternal.

It is incumbent and imperative on every sound mind to obey the truth so far as discovered or discoverable. From this there is no exemption. To neglect it, falsify it, distort it to private ends, pre-judge it, is to break faith. The truth is not with individual minds but with the universal mind, in which individual minds are comprehended. It is not the same thing with caprice or fancy, with prejudice however holy, with submission however humble. It requires renunciation of all these. It demands humility, but active, earnest humility; not the abjectness of acquiescence, but the candor of inquiry.

This authority has no absolute representative, but only relative ones. When we say that Truth is an *authority*, we mean the truth of the day,—the last,

though not the final; that which to each person stands for the truth, whatever it be. To each person something so stands. That something is crowned king for him. The notion that authority to be supreme must be *forever* supreme, the eternal supremacy of the Infinite mind, is misleading and injurious. That supremacy cannot be reached. That king is "pavilioned in clouds" and not visible, and he delegates his power to no subordinate. The authority that is supreme for men is relative to their knowledge. But a relative authority may be none the less supreme.

This is true in practical as well as in theoretical matters. Here, too, we have and need no *final* authority. Here, too, the notion of final authority is crippling and disastrous. It is better, healthier, safer to be obliged to *discover* what is right than meekly to accept what we are told is right—to be a law to ourselves than to obey a foreign power. The free surrender of the will to a freely confessed obligation is the essence of righteousness. But the obligation however freely confessed, is *obligation* still, and its claim to obedience is supreme above all other claims; supreme above taste or preference, or desire; supreme above the wish for pleasure or any private gratification. Conscience is authority. It is supreme authority, though not supreme forever. Conscience

may not report the eternal right, the right as it is in "the bosom of God;" it may not report the right of another century, or another generation, but merely the right of the juncture, the right of the epoch, of the day, possibly only of the hour. But as we live in a generation, as we are called to act in a particular juncture, to make the best of an epoch, to redeem the day, this is of no consequence. If conscience declares the duty of but a moment, for that moment it is supreme, and at that moment it makes its power felt. If it is authority for us where we are, and where we live, and as we act, it is enough. Another rule for another generation. This rule for me. Grant that conscience is not a "citizen king" reigning by popular suffrage, but a monarch reigning by its own right, still its sway is not over all the world alike. Granting that its dominion is local and temporary, it is none the less supreme.

Nor is its supremacy in the least compromised by the fact that the power which has conferred authority upon it,—the power of experience, culture, wisdom,—alters and modifies from age to age the special rules of its administration. Though conscience cannot abdicate in favor of law, custom, prejudice, fashion, it is at liberty to enlarge its judgment, to increase its knowledge of facts, to sharpen its perceptions, and augment its sensibility. In so doing it

extends its sway and confirms its supremacy, exchanging its coronet for a crown, its platform for a throne.

To those who see authority declining and anarchy coming in, it is timely to say that the authority of knowledge and goodness never declines, but gains fresh confirmation day by day. The pretenders to authority lose reputation, are discredited, and cast out. But their ruin reveals the solid permanence of the rational principles that are the same yesterday, to-day and forever.





## MORAL NARCOTICS.

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The subject to be discussed in this discourse is the sedatives which Liberalism applies to the moral sentiments of its friends ; sedatives in the form of beliefs, that, while expressing just and generous conceptions, yet easily lend themselves to deadening influences. It is a surprise to many that Liberalism should be less earnest than the opposite system, which is weighted by so many errors that are morally repulsive, and should be, it would seem, morally disabling. It is of the nature of a paradox that enthusiasm should decline as light increases ; that life should become low as the sunshine prevails ; that zeal for truth should deepen with its narrowness ; and consecration to humanity become intense in proportion to the fanaticism of its expression ; and devotion to ideas be sincere as the ideas themselves are small and dark. And a paradox this would be indeed. The statement

is no doubt exaggerated, if not essentially distorted. It is more than probable that its apparent truth is owing to the misreading of signs. On the one side, the amount of light enjoyed is over estimated, and the amount of fidelity to the light received is under-rated. Earnestness is proportioned to intelligence, though the form of the earnestness be not the form commonly recognized. Enthusiasm is according to enlightenment, though the enthusiasm lack the tinge of fanaticism which is usually associated with it. On the other side, the darkness may not, to those who dwell in it, seem so dense as it does to those outside; there may really be more light than appears; or, the earnestness, enthusiasm, devotion, or by whatever name the moral activity may be called, is less in extent and poorer in quality than is imagined. In either case, the earnestness is proportioned to the intelligence. The purer the ideas the purer the enthusiasm they generate. The darker, intenser, angrier, more passionately absorbing the enthusiasm, the more questionable the character of the beliefs from which it proceeds. The Liberalism that understands itself, is in full possession of its idea, comprehends its nature, appreciates its value, recognizes its power, perceives its bearings, will necessarily be accompanied by a very noble and beautiful devotion to its interests. If the devotion does not appear, if

the feeling is not manifested, if there is coldness and indifference where there should be warmth and zeal, then we may be sure that the idea is not grasped.

And this is probably the case with much of what is called Liberalism, and this is the explanation of the spiritual heartlessness so much complained of. The majority of liberals have failed as yet to master their principle in its positive aspects, and consequently have failed to appreciate its creative power; they have known it on its negative side, and have enjoyed its exercise as an emancipator from an ancient system which had become abhorrent to reason; but its force as a reconstructive and exalting influence has never touched them. They accept it as a destroyer of the old; they do not confess it as a builder up of the new. If they are slack in their deeds of service in its behalf; if they begrudge money, interest, influence, time to its advancement; if they give no active support to the measures taken for its prevalence and spread; if they allow the journals that advocate it to languish and decline for want of their assistance; if they make no effort to recommend and diffuse its publications; if they suffer its organized agencies to sink into discredit or die from exhaustion, criticising them because they are crude and imperfect, but taking no pains to make them more effectual, it is simply for the reason that they do not comprehend the significance or the



scope of the principle they too loosely profess. Such indifference is charged on Liberals, and apparently with justice. Their journals are barely sustained by the energy of a few, when they might easily be made to flourish by the trifling contributions of the many; their publications collect dust on the publisher's counter when but a moderate patronage from their friends would carry their influence all over the country; their liberal leagues beg, and almost hopelessly, for the support which ought to be cordially offered by the thousands who should have really at heart the ends they propose. In numbers, if they all were counted, in wealth, if their means were duly estimated, they equal the advocates of the opposite system; and yet in zeal and determination they fall immeasurably behind them.

Let us consider some of the reasons of this. Let us consider whether, in part, at least, the explanation may not be found in certain loosely apprehended ideas, which Liberalism entertains as part of its own creed; certain opinions, true enough when rightly interpreted, generous, just, and even noble when intelligently regarded, but capable of being misconceived, and rendered disabling; opinions requiring careful discrimination and discernment in order that they may be helpful. Mention of three or four such ideas, will make the truth of this evident.

1. I will speak first of the most obvious, the belief that truth is not necessary to salvation ; that people of all creeds have access to heaven ; that at the last day the question asked will not be " What have you believed ? " but " What have you done or been ? " This is one of the common-places of Liberalism, very familiar and very cheap. That it expresses a true thought, and an important one, the thought, namely, that character justifies and not creed, that sectarian distinctions are not recognized in heaven, may be admitted without damage. But to make this a justification of indifference to forms of truth, is a singular perversion of reasoning. If we dismiss the thought of a hereafter, of a day of judgment, of a gate to Paradise guarded by a mythical St. Peter, and look at the matter rationally, in the light of principle, we shall see that the modicum of impressive truth in the statement that there are no sects in heaven, is very small. To the sectarian, who is concerned to get people into heaven over the bridge of his particular creed, the opinion is exceedingly discouraging, and is worth asserting and reasserting till all ears are as weary with hearing it, as many ears are already. But to the sensible man who has at heart the higher education of human beings, the saying possesses little or no interest.

He has but a mean estimate of the value of truth,



who prizes it only as a key to enter heaven by. This man does not encourage religion, lends no support to its institutions, never goes to church, never listens to sermon or address, because he has discovered that his soul may be saved without it! Is it possible that any take credit to themselves for this mercenary view of the matter? Is it honorable to the mind to avow that its interest in ideas is measured by its sense of their potency to bribe the Creator, and purchase good places in the kingdom? A rational being should be ashamed to make such an admission. To a rational man the preciousness of ideas will be enhanced by the absence of any such corrupting and degrading associations; he will be much more interested in truth for its intrinsic nobleness and beauty than he could be in its burglarious efficacy to pick the locks or bribe the door keepers of Paradise. A high spirit can understand the refusal to lend moral or personal countenance to any pettifogging scheme of doctrine or observance looking to some private technical advantage; but it cannot so readily understand the backwardness to seize what good offices there may be in generous institutions and beneficent ideas when they present their intellectual side, and appeal to their intellectual ambition. If ideas and observances are significant *only* as mercenary devices, and are useless for other purposes, then, indeed, to

abandon them and disclaim all interest in them, would be the part of every honorable person. But this is not pretended. The ideas have a virtue of their own, quite independent of any paltry sectarian use they may be made to serve. The social exercises of religion may be profitable and precious in the way of culture and refinement and spiritual elevation, even though they avail nothing as mechanical appliances for the deliverance of the soul from hell; and the large mind will wish to avail itself of whatever culture, refinement and elevation may be within its reach.

And as for the salvation of the soul, in what does it consist, if not in sweetness and light, elasticity of purpose, brightness of hope, width of vision, spring of motive, and lift of aspiration? The soul, is not something that is to live hereafter, but something that lives now; and its salvation is its quality. Truth saves it, by rendering it clear and strong and happy, and error ruins it by rendering it dark and weak and sad. The salvation it needs instantly, amid the toils and cares, the bewilderments and seductions of the present life, in which there are no greater or more desolating evils than distrustful fears and dark despairs; the ruin is to be dreaded here, where there is so much that is worth possessing and richly worth enjoying. Noble beliefs introduce noble purposes

and endeavors; they are the parents of noble life. Men who have an ambition to enlarge and exalt their rational nature make great account of them, find them indispensable to their happiness and usefulness, are glad to avow them, and thankful to be influential in their spread. They feel that what is good for them must be good for others; and they have something like an enthusiasm in the work of disseminating truth among those who do not know what it is. Their sense of responsibility as custodians of ideas that carry cheer and animation into their bosom, is as great as theirs is who are persuaded that their dogma will deliver souls from hell; and with reason, for truth does deliver souls from hell, the hell of ignorance, the prison house of prejudice. If there is something respectable in the zeal of the sectarian who rattles his creaking engine over the stones to put out an imaginary fire; there is something infinitely more than respectable in the enthusiasm of the rationalist who pours the fresh blood of truth into the wasted veins of men paralyzed by superstition.

2. But the unmoved Liberal replies, is not every form of belief and every kind of institution best for the time in which it prevails, and for the people who hold it? And if it is, why should I vex myself to disturb the well arranged order by supplanting an error which may be salutary by a truth which, being

untimely, may be profitless or worse? We condemn the missionary for carrying his religion to people who have a religion of their own, and one better adapted to their occasions; are we not guilty of the same foolishness if we commend the ideas that are wholesome and refreshing to us, to people who are content with the ideas they already possess, though to us they seem absurd? Why disturb a faith that is fixed because it seems to us erroneous? Why assail superstitions, even abject ones, if the people to whom they are native, are satisfied to retain them? Why take pains to promulgate principles that, after all, may unfix more minds than they instruct? Let us enjoy the luxury of our opinions, and allow to others the luxury of theirs, thus avoiding even the semblance of bigotry, and exhibiting the wide toleration that becomes humane and philosophical spirits.

It should require no extended argument to disclose the sophistry of a position like this. The primary assumption is unwarrantable, that the beliefs that are current in any particular place, at any particular time, among any particular class or race of men, *are* their native, natural, inborn, organic beliefs. If they are, it will be idle to assail them; but whether they are or not, is the very point to be determined. The fact that classes, orders, nations of men entertain, passionately entertain, certain beliefs,



by no means justifies the inference that they are the truest beliefs they are capable of entertaining, or the most salutary for them to entertain. They may have been good for their ancestors, yet not be good for them. They may have been native to their ancestors, yet theirs only by tradition or habit. They may have been excellent in former days, under different social circumstances, yet wholly unsuited to a changed situation in affairs. They may have been real and genuine to people of one grade of culture, yet to people of a more advanced culture they may be artificial and conventional.

There is probably no system of beliefs professed on the planet that is in all, or even in essential respects, suited to the populations who hold it; that is not in many respects obsolete, in some respects a clog or an incumbrance. A large portion of Christendom frets impatiently under Christianity. A large portion of professed Christians are uneasy within the system they give in their allegiance to. It is not their natural faith; they quarrel with parts of it; cannot understand other parts; make effort to submit their minds to an authority that seems arbitrary, and to opinions that seem irrational; often they would be glad of deliverance from an intellectual thralldom that has been imposed on them by education. It may be doubted if an individual person



exists who may not with profit exchange his opinions for others, which he never heard of, or has heard misrepresented by their enemies.

It is the fashion to speak of Romanism as the best religion for the laboring classes, who need a religion of authority to keep them in order, and a religion of form to impress their imagination; and it is often said that the decline of Romanism would be a misfortune to the ignorant and superstitious, on whom a more rational faith would be thrown away. Romanism is sometimes called, and not inappropriately, the religion of children, as being an inarticulate expression of sentiment suited to the use of those who either, having no feelings of their own repeat the words or signs that have been fashioned by others; or, having feelings of their own, are unable to give to them original expression. It is more correct to call it the religion of the irresponsible who resign all charge of themselves. It is the religion of the rich, the fashionable, the ceremonious, who are too much immersed in grave concerns or trifling affairs to undertake the care of their "spiritual interests." They prefer a religion of authority, which will relieve them of the responsibility of thought; a religion of form and ceremony which will gracefully fall in with the outside pomp of their daily existence; a religion of antiquity, which will give a background of dig-

nity to their state; a religion of costume, parade, and symbol, which will please their æsthetic taste. Such a church is attractive to elegant and stately minds. It has received its distinction from such; it came to power through the influence of such; it ruled in ages when such as these held sway in the world. Wealth and fashion are episcopal, always; episcopacy prevails in the great cities. Even Puritan cities become episcopal as they become rich.

The religion of the poor is of the opposite character; not ceremonial in any considerable measure; not showy or external; not intellectual either, but passionate, tumultuous in feeling and expression, superficial and noisy with emotion. Among English-speaking people Methodism is the faith of the poor. The blacks of the South and of the North find Methodism the religion best adapted to their needs. The colliers of England sprang to life at the call of Wesley. The Irish have had Romanism thrust upon them, bequeathed to them as an ancestral inheritance. As such they cling to it. But it is not the native climate of their souls. Indeed it may be doubted whether Romanism is the native climate of any souls in the XIXth century. If it did not exist, it would hardly be created to-day. It is an anachronism that is maintained by constant vigilance, and would be shed like a useless garment if the priest-

hood permitted. It exists through the force of ignorance, and by perpetuating ignorance. The fashionable can afford to be ignorant for they have less than the average use for wits; but the poor and toiling need every ounce of knowledge and intelligence, of self-reliance and ambition they can obtain.

The central doctrine of the popular religion is salvation by the blood of Christ. But it cannot fairly be called a native belief with even the majority of those who profess it. So far is it from being so, that periodical efforts must be made to revive the efficacy of it, and these efforts are but partially successful with the very class that professes to receive it. The doctrine is native to helpless, hopeless people, in a condition of personal and social imbecility, who have resigned all thought of doing aught for themselves. There is no permanent class of such people in our community. All Americans have their chance; they receive reward for labor, advancement for merit; they are provided with opportunity for education; they enjoy protection from the law; their homes are guarded; their conscience is unfettered; their worship is free. The country and the age ply them with incessant stimulus and nerve them to the highest pitch of self-reliance. In their prosperous seasons it never occurs to them to commit their dearest interests to the keeping of a foreign power,

though that power be a Saviour. It is only in a season of idleness and enforced depression that such an idea can be brought home to them; and then it is entertained with difficulty. The return of prosperity will put this nightmare of sin and despair to flight as surely as the sunrise drives the wild animals to covert; and the fearful minds will, in secret, entertain other thoughts.

The notion that the creeds which masses of men cherish and are loth to part with are the best for them, leads to strange conclusions. A superstitious regard for the sanctity of the Sabbath is all but universal among Protestants of the uninstructed class. To do any work on the "Lord's day" is reckoned by them a sin; to go on the most harmless pleasure excursion on that day is a guilt that may righteously call down a judgment of divine wrath. Is the inflexible determination with which the persuasion is held an argument that it is wisely held, and should not be disturbed? That would be a rash conclusion. Were the superstition associated with the rich and the gay, who could afford to lose a day occasionally,—and whose days of amusement are numerous enough without counting the Sabbath—it would be practically harmless; nay, it might be practically beneficial, as putting a check on excessive amusement. But for the poor man, who cannot afford to



lose his haystack, and who has no leisure in the week for a ramble in the country or a row on the river, the prohibition laid on those hours of leisure time may amount to a heavy tax on his possessions or a severe drain on his health.

If we could effect a new distribution of superstitions so that the disabilities they impose might fall on the people best able to bear them, the superstitions themselves would be endurable. But to effect this would be equivalent to abolishing them altogether where they prevail. And there is nothing but this left. The warfare against existing systems of error is as unavoidable as the conflict of light with the vapors and spectres of the dark.

3. But here a third obstacle presents itself, in the form of a general notion, which finds expression in the sentiment that "there is a soul of truth in error," a "soul of good in evil," or, as otherwise stated, that "error is truth in the making," that "evil is good in the making." In a sense, these assertions may be accepted as reasonable. There is no pure error; there is no pure evil. Error was, in its origin, the best expression of a true seeking that could be hit on; evil was, in its origin, the most complete form that the good intention could assume. But that does not argue that the expression is in itself correct, that the form is intrinsically excellent. The expres-



sion may do no justice whatever to the thought, may even disguise and caricature it; the form may completely misrepresent the intention, even to the point of concealing and falsifying it.

To say that there is a soul of truth in error is simply to say that error, in its special form of doctrine, resulted from the endeavor to find truth; that it was the best answer the intellect could make, *at the time*, to reason's question. But to say that the endeavor to find the truth *sanctifies the error*, that the soul of truth is contained in the error in such a sense that the crushing of the error bruises the soul of truth inside, is a sad infatuation. It may be necessary to dash the error in pieces in order to liberate the soul of truth and make its beauty visible. The error may be the sepulchre of the truth and not its shrine. The soul of truth is not in it any longer as a vital principle. It never was in it contentedly; never was in it except as an impulse or tendency that would have gone much further if it could have overpassed the limitations which ignorance and incompleteness imposed. The intellectual form was never a terminus—never anything but a station to be touched at and left.

Strange tenderness, that persuades men that they should deal gently with mental abominations, because they were respectable once! Are they so con-

siderate of the stale fish in the market which once was fresh? Or of the rancid oil in the cruse, which once was sweet? Or of the alienated and embittered friendships, which once were dear? When the soul of truth is no longer discoverable in the body of error, there is no wisdom in preserving or cossetting the error. It is time wasted to recommend damaged goods because they have been handsome. Yet this is what we are continually doing; trying to make men believe things, or allowing them to believe things that have not only lost all the virtue they ever had, but have become quick poisons.

There is no more abominable doctrine than that of everlasting punishment for misbelief or misdeed. Yet we may believe that there was a soul of truth in it originally. Those who fashioned it were men, not fiends; and to them it seemed quite other than detestable; to them it expressed, probably in the only way they could express it, their horror of guilt against the divine law. It is easy to imagine that men who were shut up within a narrow circle of ideas, who knew little of human nature, who were not careful to weigh their words, and to whom thoughts were spectral creatures of the mind, unrelated to vital realities—who thought about God till no other thought had the least value, and speculated about Christ till all other speculation sank into

pallid shadow, with whom the character of Christ exhausted holiness, and the deeds of Christ summed up sacrifice, and the claim of Christ to the uttermost of human devotion overtopped all possible service that men could bring, and the smallest withholding of tribute from Christ, though it were the tribute of a thought, an emotion, and that not wilfully refused, but only carelessly kept back—it is easy, I say, to imagine that men in this state of mind, somewhat hard in their sensibilities, too, on the side of pain and misery, should have been in a mood to fashion the most hideous of dogmas. Language takes its color from feeling, and when feeling is extravagant, intemperate, wild, language is delirious. Unwholesome minds are not saved by sincerity from unwholesome conceptions.

The doctrine of everlasting punishment has come to us from such sources as these. Respect the intentions of the men who devised it; but because you respect their intention, discard and abhor their device, as they would do were they living and feeling men to-day. If there be a soul of truth in error it is time it were there no longer; it is time it were dragged or dug out. To rescue it from that bondage might well start a crusade for the deliverance of the "holy places."

To the plea that evil must be unmolested, be-

cause there is a soul of good in it, the same reply might be made. When a thing becomes an evil, the soul of good in it has departed if it was ever there. The odor of corruption indicates that life is extinct. Evil has no soul of good in it; evil has no soul in it of any kind. Evil is nothing; it is simply absence of good; shadow which is absence of light. The saying that "evil is good in the making," misleads. Evil has no creative power; it makes nothing; the only sense in which it can be regarded as good in the making is that which comes to us when we are minded to "make away" with it in order that the good may be produced as soon as possible. If evil is good in the making, the friends of goodness will assist the process of making by all the means at their command, and those means are all summed up in the increase and establishment of goodness. The way to dispel darkness is to introduce light; the way to dispel error is to promulgate truth; the way to overthrow evil is to inculcate good.

The truth can never be put down, we say; the right must prevail. But the teachers of truth in any special age may be put down; the advocates of right at any particular epoch may not prevail. There does certainly seem to be at the centre of the world a tendency towards truth, a power that "works for righteousness;" yet the continuance of that tendency



is often, to our apprehension, interrupted by human negligence and wilfulness, and the power that works for righteousness gives signs of lassitude when good men are faithless. It is perhaps not wholly incorrect to say that this belief in a divine predestination against error and evil is a belief not quite justified as yet by facts, but cordially entertained and cherished by earnest men consulting their own enthusiastic faiths. It is certain that the belief fluctuates with the ebbing and flowing of human confidence; that it is full and strong in the epochs of strenuous endeavor; that in periods of supine indolence it languishes. To us, at least, it is a faith, not a fact, a fact only as it is a faith; and they who relax effort and throw themselves in implicit dependence on the bosom of the care-taking providence, will be the first to be abandoned. Providence becomes bleary-eyed and faint when humanity slumbers. Without man there is no visible power competent to conduct the universe of souls.

Liberalism then is at fault in alleging as grounds of its own inactivity the beliefs just now discussed—these namely, that belief is not necessary to salvation; that extant beliefs are best for the people that entertain them; that even errors contain a soul of truth, and evils a soul of good. These sayings, so far as they are true at all, furnish arguments for energy



and motives for zeal. They should act as engines rather than as brakes, for they suggest nobler objects as well as purer inspirations.

The chief discouragement to human enthusiasm is the general insensibility to the needs of others. Having obtained what we desire for ourselves, having made ourselves comfortable, we sit down contented to enjoy our privileges, forgetting the multitude who desire the same things for themselves. As the foremost of a company that have lost their way in a forest will, on issuing unexpectedly forth upon the open plain, fling themselves down on the grass, in the shade, and dismiss all thought of the bewildered and disheartened stragglers they have left behind;—so the leaders of the intellectual advance sit down to enjoy the prospect spread out before them, unmindful of the responsibility that is laid upon them to show others the way to their privilege. It was a standing criticism in the old anti-slavery days that the northern blacks were indifferent to the cause of the blacks in the south: being well off themselves, they were unconcerned that others of their race suffered.

Find fault as we may, on several counts, with the sectarian spirit, we must concede to it this virtue of fellow feeling with the spiritual destitution of mankind. Christendom has many sins on its head, but

its mantle of soul-charity is large enough to cover many of them. It is interested that all the world may partake of its good things. The "evangelist of the hippodrome" has no misgivings on the score of his own acceptance at the last day; but that assurance, so far from deadening his concern for the great multitude of imperilled souls, increases and intensifies it. He has no wish to enjoy a solitary heaven. No doubt much of his solicitude is misbestowed; much of his preaching is lost on the air; much of his endeavor is wasted. That must always be the case. We work, all of us, in the dark. We commit mistakes. Many times we say what had better be left unsaid, and do what had better be left undone. Our own views are tainted with error; the views we assail are tinged with truth. We use arguments clumsily, and make inconsiderate appeals. We take up rash positions, and defend them with intemperate zeal. We inculcate error along with our best considered wisdom by the spirit of our advocacy; and we undo much of the good we purpose by the heat of our personal passion. But for all this there is no help. We can but do our best, and hope that others will do better. Herbert Spencer's remark may be very sensible, that in most cases it is best to attempt nothing, but to leave things as they are; but when we have rebuked meddling, and reduced

officiousness to the lowest point, and put a strong curb on our propensity to interfere with the tangled disorder of things, we cannot be wholly satisfied with ourselves till we have attempted something in the way of discharging our responsibility for the mental and moral condition of our fellow men. Sympathy is nobler than apathy, even if it is not always more beneficial. Apart from its particular cause, which may be more or less reasonable, earnestness carries with it its own justification. For it keeps alive the spirit of humanity, and so far encourages the hope of progress. ✓

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

2. The second part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

## NEW WINE IN OLD BOTTLES.

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The thoughts that come to me are on the subject of clearness and faithfulness in conviction; a subject interesting always, but especially important in times of transition like ours. We have recently been cheered by an example of rare intellectual honesty in a public man. A professor of science, a popular lecturer on astronomy, abandons his religious creed because it was inconsistent with his scientific faith. He had been by profession, a Roman Catholic, and known as such in England and America. A Catholic not from independent conviction, probably, but from inheritance. There is no reason to think that he ever gave special study or thought to questions of theological belief. People who are in that case are usually the most tenacious of their theological opinions whatever they may be. The people who never think of their beliefs are more wedded to



✧ them than those who think much ; for when beliefs settle and become coagulated, nothing less than a great explosion will loosen them. This man's religious opinions, however, made no portion of his mind. He had been absorbed in his scientific pursuits and would perhaps never have revised his creed to bring it into conformity with his knowledge, had 'not a scientific friend brought down on himself the wrath of the religious public by proclaiming views exactly coincident with his own. This fact awakened him to the duty of revising his creed, and finding that it failed at cardinal points to correspond to the order of things he had found prevailing in the world, he frankly and publicly said so, not being able, as so many are, to bear about in his bosom a quiet conscience while two opposing faiths claimed right of rule over his mind.

To some this frankness seemed unnecessary. He might, they thought, have kept the matter to himself and forborne from adding new vexations to a distracted world. Or he might by ingenious interpretations have brought his new faith into harmony with his old one. Exegesis is powerful. Its wonders of daily achievement tempt us at times to think it omnipotent. Theological adepts and biblical experts together, are equal to almost anything in the way of expository prestidigitation, and the task of recon-

ceiling modern science with Romanism was certainly not too difficult for athletes pulling hard at both ends. Our friend was rash, perhaps, in declining the attempt to swallow the papal system before satisfying himself of the virtue of sufficient lubrication. But his clear eye perceived that the attempt would endanger his intellectual life, that if he succeeded it would be by a straining and dislocating process, and so, man-fashion, he declined the task, and saved his integrity. He disavowed his theological creed and kept faith with his reason.

So conspicuous an example brings up again the question of the wisdom and honesty of pouring into the old skins of dogma the new wine of knowledge. The question is pertinent only to those who believe that the wine is new and that the skins are old. They who regard the new wine as a fraud, no genuine wine at all, but a poor counterfeit, a manufactured article, compounded of deleterious drugs, will hesitate before putting it into any skins, least of all into the precious ones, that a rich and noble vintage has consecrated. They who complacently think of the old skins as no more than sufficient to contain the generous vintage they have already preserved for many years, will of course object to pouring it out, in order to make room for crude, unfermented liquor which will burst the skins, and

perhaps be good for nothing if it does not. None but those who see that the last year's skins are empty, and who value too much the new wine to risk its quality and substance by entrusting it to them, will be interested in the matter under discussion. The convinced believer, of whatever school, wants no new wine while the supply of the old is full; and will prefer that the old skins be empty for a season to filling them with what he feels to be the worthless product of a bad year. But all are not convinced believers. There is never a time when sensitive minds are not tortured with the task of deciding between the claims of the new faith and the old, between the desire to maintain pleasant relations with the old, and to keep honest faith with the new; and the sensitiveness of the mind is shown by the quickness and clearness with which it discerns its duty in this respect.

With an unerring eye Jesus saw the situation and the duty it imposed. From him comes to all Christians the warning against putting the new wine into the already distended skins. He saw how impossible it was for one who believed that the Sabbath was made for man, to conform to practices which implied that man was made for the Sabbath; how impossible it was for one, who believed that people should *rejoice* or grieve according as natural occasions

prompted, to fall in with customs that made fasting and feasting merely ceremonial observances, to be kept whether men felt like it or not; how impossible it was for one who believed in the common humanity of all men to acquiesce in narrow and exclusive usages that made it guilt to dine in company with "publicans and sinners." The customs were venerable; the practices had the sanction of holy men; the ceremonies had a certain beauty and usefulness; the institutions were precious as relics of an earnest time; but a new sentiment had come, and it demanded on the part of those who received it, a jealous care lest its quantity be wasted and its quality spoiled.

If Jesus felt this so strongly, minds of the same order of fidelity to-day must feel it strongly too. For the distinction between the new and the old is too clearly marked to be overlooked. The new wine is not grown in the same vineyards as the old. The old was grown on the soil of theology, the new is grown on the soil of science. In every respect the mental products are unlike. The doctrine that man was created perfect and fell, is contrasted with the doctrine that man was created imperfect and rose. The doctrine that man was introduced upon the planet a new creature, radically unlike any that had preceded him, is contrasted with the doctrine that

man was the natural result of processes that had gone before. The doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible is contrasted with the doctrine of the inspiration of the mind. The doctrine that truth is imparted by supernatural revelation, is contrasted with the doctrine that truth is acquired by patient investigation and slow advance. The doctrine that the soul must be submitted to an external spiritual authority is contrasted with the doctrine that the soul is itself the seat of authority. It is seldom, indeed, that the new thought is so sharply confronted with the old, as in the case of our professor who was at the same time a Roman Catholic and an Evolutionist; but the incongruity must be felt by any one who seizes the cardinal ideas of the two systems; and the resulting duty comes home to men whose religious faith is very far indeed from Rome.

The duty, let me repeat, presses only on those who recognize the discrepancy, and practically on those only who, accepting mentally the new ideas, are tempted to accommodate them to the old forms. Further, it presses only on conscientious minds. To skeptics, triflers who think the matter of no consequence, who doubt if one creed be any truer or better than another; who dismiss religious questions from their minds as questions that do not concern them, and are content with the judgment of the majority; who



regard religion as a social institution it is proper that ladies and gentlemen should support, and that is best supported by those who accept meekly the prevailing usage ; who take the faith of their fathers without cavil ; who join the sect that promises most in the shape of business patronage, fashionable repute or sentimental ease ; who attend the church that wife or husband, from personal considerations, selects, or that stands most conveniently in the neighborhood ; to the people who have not the vitality of mind or conscience to take aside even if they are with it in opinion the issue we are discussing has no pertinence. They are without conviction and without earnestness to form a conviction. Divine things mean nothing to them ; spiritual interests are no interests ; religion is upholstery, and they want the richest and most fashionable there is.

Let such as these pass. There are others who set a value on the integrity of their minds. To such as these, there remains a question of duty. We will try faithfully to decide it as for conscientious men. Let us consider the pleas advanced by the best, who, while accepting the new faith, still maintain their associations with the old.

1. The new, it is said, is not, as yet, a faith, but a miscellaneous heap of opinions, part true, part false, in either case mostly conjecture, which may get

established and may not, but which at present are not entitled to be called a system. We will live they say in the old house till the new one is built. It is not perfect, nor altogether convenient; on many accounts we shall be glad to leave it. The foundations here and there are giving way; the roof is settling, but it will last our time, and, such as it is, it is better than a lodging on the cold ground beneath the stars.

But men who are interested in the construction of new houses commonly give a thought to their building, hasten it if it lags, are interested in the materials and arrangement, look forward eagerly to the time when they shall be able to leave the old dwelling for the new, live in the old as on sufferance, and point to the new as their residence in the near future. That is their home; this is the place where they stay impatiently till the home shall be ready.

What should we think of a man who spoke of his rapidly rising house as a mere collection of building materials that might come to something or might not, and in the meantime never troubled himself to ascertain whether or no it was likely to come to anything? What should we think of a man who, when the new house stood ready finished, the house he had been so deeply interested in, did not care to go near it, or even to know how it looked? Yet this is the case

with those who complain that radicals pull down but never build up, destroy but never replace, take away beliefs and give only guesses in exchange. They will not see that the time when this could be truly said is passed; that rationalism is a system, a compact and harmonious if uncompleted system, a habitable and even comfortable dwelling place, altogether fit for a gentleman to live in, with modern conveniences, with sunshine and ventilation, the appliances for health and luxury. They who really desire to leave the old building need not stay another hour. They who say they wish to leave it, yet remain, must find a better excuse for their stay.

2. Is it a better excuse that they are unwilling to disturb the comfort of the residents in the old house? that the old faith shelters multitudes of tender souls who would be homeless and orphaned if they were disturbed; and that they would be disturbed by the departure of friends they had trusted in? 2

We will not reply in a tone of remonstrance or rebuke to a plea like this. A tender regard for the spiritual condition of others is too lovely a trait to be disrespectfully spoken of. But it is worth considering that others have their claim on this gentle regard, as well as the comfortable,—namely, the uncomfortable. All who are of the ancient faith are

not happy. Many are exceedingly unhappy; fretting against forms they cannot get through, groaning under doctrines they cannot repudiate, and wishing in their hearts that people who are wiser and stronger than they would set an example by going and opening for others a way out of their bondage. That these restless and discontented ones are as many as the satisfied and complacent ones is not asserted. The thoughtful are never so numerous as the unthoughtful; the craving and aspiring never so numerous as the supine: but they are more interesting and appealing. They have deep and active feelings, while the others are only presumed to have. They have wants, while the others are simply sheltered against wants. These are the true subjects for soul charity, if we have any to spare; and charity to these requires fidelity to conviction, that their fidelity may be enlightened and supported.

Then again, as regards comfort, is there no solid, generous comfort for those who, having been disturbed, have found peace beyond the disturbance, having been driven from their quiet retreat, have made for themselves a new home? However painful doubt and misgiving may be, if naturally encountered and bravely met, the agony is soon over; the mind is clearer and firmer for the struggle, and the fresh assurance is worth more by a good deal than

the stale assumption. The people who complain of being disturbed are people who love ease better than faith; and the people who quarrel with the disturbers are people who either have no questions to answer, or dread the answer that may be given.

But whether this be true or not, the policy of ministering to spiritual comfort is a very dangerous one. It is a policy that no earnest soul ever acts on; a policy that heroic souls repudiate with indignation. Did Luther act on this policy when he threw down his gauntlet before Rome, and won for Christendom at the expense of bloodshed and heart-break, the emancipation of Christendom from that species of authority? Did Paul act on it when he came to an open rupture with the apostles, withstood Peter to the face, and swung the better part of the early church away from its moorings into a stormy sea of divisions and sorrows? And who was it that cried, in bitter anguish of heart: "I have a baptism to be baptized withal, and would God it were accomplished! I am come to set a man at variance with his father; to make the members of households foes; to bring not peace, but a sword?"

Nay, who does, in any emergency act on a policy like this? Do we not painfully recall to life the drowning man, disturbing the delicious comfort of his suffocation? Do we not rudely shake those who



are yielding to the treacherous blandishments of the benumbing cold? Do we not rouse the luxurious dreamers who unconsciously are inhaling the noxious fumes of gas? He that breaks the spell of comfort that he may renew the spell of life, is a benefactor, no less in spiritual things than in physical. And he that refuses to disturb comfort, on the ground that nothing else is so desirable, is simply destitute of faith in worthy things.

3. But it is urged that the necessity of leaving the old system, is not so apparent, even if the doctrines cannot be received in their literal sense. They bear many interpretations, being elastic and suggestive. In fact they seem addressed to the imagination rather than to the understanding, and tempt us to look below the surface into the depths for the hidden senses that they contain. They may be called representative doctrines, intended to convey thoughts in a pictorial form, and yield deeper and deeper meanings as they are the more profoundly searched. That the framers of them had in mind when they shaped them just what we have in mind when we read them, is by no means certain. Yet our interpretation may be as good as theirs, and the interpretation of others as good as ours. There is, therefore, no dishonesty in accepting them in our sense.

This is the plea, and it would be a good one if the doctrines in question were popularly regarded as having no meaning in particular. It may be the duty of the scholar, disregarding the popular interpretation, to resolve them back into their original sense, and declare that to be their genuine sense, though absolutely unlike the sense vulgarly assigned to them. But with the common believer the case is not the same. The doctrines are held in a peculiar sense. The words are taken to mean what they appear on their face to mean. The thoughts are entertained as prose not as poetry. The beliefs in depravity, the atonement, Christ, justification, salvation, heaven and hell are not received as representative beliefs, but as plain literal beliefs; and to profess them in another than their usual significance is deceiving. The intention may be harmless enough, but the practical effect is not harmless, because not fair. If it is understood that language may convey just what one chooses to put into it, well and good; but then why use it at all? Why not discredit it as "spoiled phraseology" and use other language that means something?

This notion that religious dogmas are elastic and will contain new wine to the nozzle without bursting, leads to strange results. The recital of the apostles' creed would have a singular sound to an ear

listening and taking in the voices of a such congregation. What a hubbub of definitions and qualifications! One avows a belief in the Christ through regarding him merely as a man; another affirms the inspiration of the scripture while unable to say wherein it differs from other books; a third confesses the depravity of human nature, understanding depravity in a figurative way; a fourth responds to the article on everlasting punishment, only everlasting does not mean everlasting, neither does punishment mean punishment. To this one the atonement is a profound truth, all attempts to interpret which are vain. To that one the deity of Christ is a deep mystery which means nothing to the finite intelligence, but which to the infinite mind is light itself.

To men who like to play fast and loose with speech, who are willing to confound knowledge with hollow contradictions, who accept the definition of language as a device for concealing thought, such practice may be amusing. "To win enough credit by slaying a dead lie to be justified in dealing tenderly with a living one; to be earnest enough to complain of the devil's dark complexion, and yet too candid to call him quite black," may be a satisfactory discharge of duty to conscience in some cases. But it is not a discharge which any thoroughly sincere man will accept. Can any one

pretend that plain thoughts about man or God, life or death, the here or the hereafter would take naturally now these ancient forms of expression? Would the creeds be formed to-day for the first time? Not one of them; not a single one. All are out of date, obsolete, grotesque, incomprehensible. There can therefore be no call to keep them in appearance alive by stuffing them with the shreds of modern ideas. It is altogether too easy to substitute phrases for thoughts, especially when the phrases are popular and the thoughts unpopular. "The habit grows on us till creeds come to be mere screens under cover of which we may skulk out of the orthodox intrenchments into the opposite camp." \* To do so is very convenient for the weak and defenceless who cannot brave the danger incident to crossing the open plain in face of batteries, but it is after all, an ignoble way of evading responsibility. The scientific clergyman who put the doctrine of "protoplasm" into the 139th psalm, and found the old Hebrew song more luminous by reason of it, congratulated himself on having succeeded in saving his orthodoxy without sacrificing his Huxleyism. But he verily did not save his orthodoxy without sacrificing his sanity.

"The time has come," says Mr. Mill, "in which it is the duty of all qualified persons to speak

their minds about popular religious beliefs." The reason for thinking that the time has come, are many and obvious. But the chief reason is that until this is done courageously the prestige of those beliefs as, in some sense, an authorized and infallible expression of religious truth will remain unbroken, and good but weak men will try to accommodate their views to them to the fatal prejudice of their intellectual conscience. When an eminent popular clergyman can frankly expose the contradictions of Scripture, while at the same time he assumes its inspiration as the Word of God, and severely rebukes those who, on the strength of the same contradictions, pronounce the book uninspired and in no sense the "Word of God," which could not contradict itself, it is evident that the time has come for plainness of speech, that the speaker may be freed from a paralyzing spell. "Who," says an earnest writer, "can see without impatience the fearful waste of good purpose and noble aspiration caused by our reticence at a time when it is of primary importance to turn to account all the forces which make for the elevation of mankind? Society will not improve as it might when those who should be leaders of progress are staggering backwards and forwards with their eyes passionately reverted to the past." There is no substitute for utter intellectual sincerity. Not



even the sweetest qualities—reverence, sympathy, respect for past grandeurs, tenderness for present weaknesses—are good enough to take its place. Without it thorough manliness is not possible. Of course there is a flippant, hasty, angry outspokenness that is entitled to no praise. The duty I inculcate is an earnest duty for earnest men who have not feelings or impressions only, but convictions. Such owe duty to themselves, their fellow-men and the truth, which no sentimentalism, however pious, justifies them in declining.

4. The temporizer has one argument more, the validity whereof is accepted with a facility by no means creditable to the veracity of its abettors, an argument that plainly reveals the demoralization produced by the popular religious faith. It is said by otherwise honorable men that the old system is best overthrown by those who remain inside and leaven it with their new ideas. It is to be hoped that people who reason in this way are simply casting about for an excuse to stay inside for the sake of their personal comfort, for otherwise their conduct is open to imputations that no persons of sensitive feeling can sit under a moment. To remain inside because one belongs there, of course needs no apology. To remain inside because the misgiving or uneasiness is not great enough to compel departure,

is natural and commendable. To remain inside because on the whole, the satisfaction is greater than the dissatisfaction, is excusable. But to remain inside *for the purpose of undermining the building*, or in the knowledge that by remaining an influence is exerted that may tend to undermine the building, looks, if not like actual treachery, at all events, like indifference and insensibility to the power of example. Such persons are intentionally or unintentionally, enemies under disguise in the camp. If active enemies, they have no right to complain of the harshest judgment that can be passed on them. If passive foes, the example they set of hollowness and temporizing, is one that cannot on any ground be defended. Radicals sometimes counsel malcontents with the popular religion to stay in their churches, assuring them that their liberalizing influence will work more powerfully and quickly there than it would if they came out. The quarter whence the advice comes renders it suspicious. High minded men neither give such advice nor take it.

It would seem as if the duty of plain speaking on matters that are commonly held of so great account, and in dealing with which personal veracity stands for so much, required no special urging. Nor would it, but for the notion that religious ideas have a sacred character that takes them out of the cate-

gory of intellectual conceptions, makes them inaccessible to definition, and renders the garment of cloud their proper investiture. Once allow that religious ideas are simply ideas, that as with other ideas, clearness is a quality desirable in them, that to be effective they must be sharply apprehended and firmly grasped, and all confusion on this matter will disappear.

They who plead for plainness of speech do it on principles it is hard to gainsay. In the first place they contend that thought to do justice to itself must be made intelligible, and to be made intelligible must be presented in all practicable completeness. By making thoughts intelligible I do not mean bringing them down to uncultivated minds, doling them out in dribblets, insinuating them under cover of accepted opinions, qualifying them, coating them with sugar to make them palatable. This is to make them unintelligible. I mean giving them all possible clearness and point, delivering them with such force and precision that they cannot be misunderstood, furnishing them with edge and point. We respect the professor of Calvinism who, instead of disguising its odious peculiarities, takes pains to bring them forth; rejoices to exhibit his faith in all its bearings on Providence, human life and human destiny; blinks nothing, compromises nothing, with-

holds nothing; proclaims unflinchingly his belief in the worthlessness of the natural life, the illusiveness of experience, the vanity of the world, the powerlessness of the will, the inevitable doom to destruction of all who, however seemingly wise, good, virtuous, humane or lovely, have not experienced the supernatural change of heart that ensues from an acceptance of the creed and a participation in the sacrament; who threatens an everlasting hell, without wincing, and announces the hopelessness of escape for any body except by the special favor of the divine grace. Thus proclaimed, the system is put upon its essential merits, and men are set in the way of knowing what its merits are.

In the same way we respect the man who, holding the opposite principle, is faithful to that, stops at no half-way expositions of his idea, but makes haste to run it out as swiftly as possible to its ultimate conclusions; delights in pointing out the new vistas it opens, in displaying its bearings on all problems of interest, in emphasizing the hopes and promises it holds forth. He is glad to give expression to his confidence in the human mind, his reliance on the human will, his trust in human integrity, his anticipations of human welfare from the natural advance of mankind in enlightenment under the law of liberty.

That this is the way to make ideas effective need not be said. No truth can be effective till it is fairly projected against a background of opposing belief. We are interested at present in persuading people of the virtue of air and light, of sanitary agencies in close cities. Do we tell them that air, in order that it may fulfil the requisitions of a health agent, must be breathed over several hundred times; must be shut up a week or two in a close chamber; must be mixed with the fumes of alcohol and the reek of tobacco; must be passed through foul alleys and halls, carried over muck heaps, strained through cattle pens gas factories and pig styes? Do we tell them that light, in order to display its reviving qualities, should be let in through small window panes well coated with dust; should steal into houses like a thief, creeping round a corner or leaping a wall; should be flung in disdainfully by reflection from a white fence; should be limited to half-an-hour at early morning; or be taken with a strong admixture of darkness as in the hours immediately following the going down of the sun? Why should the method which would be fatal in the natural world be wise and salutary in the intellectual?

It is very certain that in the intellectual world convictions alone tell with controlling force. Human-



ity is pushed onwards by the moral weight that conviction gives to thoughts. In scientific matters doctrines stand or fall by their own power or weakness. Knowledge is its own justification. But in social and moral concerns, the power of the person is needed to commend the idea. Even in science, the bringer of new tidings must put into his message the power of individual faith if he expects that it will be received. Knowledge is most acceptable when associated with feeling. The demonstrator must make himself felt as a man. It is the infusion of soul into opinions, that makes them beliefs; it is the infusion of soul into beliefs that makes them convictions. Ours is an age of opinions, and an age of opinions is never an earnest age. But why should it be an age of opinions? There are materials enough for beliefs; materials enough for convictions. One may, without bigotry, claim to be in possession of *truths*—not of whims, caprices, conjectures, but of TRUTHS; not of dogmas, indeed, which are truths finished and put up in packages for transportation, but of truths that have in them futures of discovery; truths therefore to be welcomed with enthusiasm and pursued with zeal. In this transition period, when the old systems are breaking up and new systems are forming, and men generally walk as in a mist, the discerning ones can see the glittering points

round which the regenerating forces are gathering, and can follow in imagination, the trail of splendor that promises new glories in the coming time. It is not expected of them that they will be zealots, for they claim no infallibility; or wranglers, for they are too busy with unfolding the new ideas to assail the old ones; or controversialists, for the most effectual controverting of error is done by the earnest promulgation of truth. It is expected and demanded that they will be believers and honest advocates of what they believe.

The prophets of new ideas are warned against the danger of pushing their principle too far. If it be a just principle the danger is imaginary, for a just principle cannot, from the nature of the case, be pushed too far, supposing it to be pushed honestly. The difficulty is to push it far enough to exhibit its capability and bearing; that we must from shortsightedness stop so soon; that we must from ignorance leave so much to conjecture; that we cannot be as radical as our principle requires, and consequently cannot exhibit the principle in its beauty, is the discouragement of the believer. He has his own thought to work out, and that he may work it out he must give himself to it unreservedly.

The great need in the intellectual world, the crying need in this department of the intellectual

world is a love of truth. The time is happily passing for that passionate zeal for dogmas which once stood for a love of truth; it has been succeeded by a skepticism that doubts whether one thing be truer than another, when, if there be such a thing as truth, it can be discovered. The time is coming, nay is already here, when earnest men, without partisanship or passion, but with pure enlightened enthusiasm, may pursue the leadings of their positive beliefs. The bitter wars of opinion will cease when they that have light shall live as children of the light.

## THE NATURAL MAN.

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The natural man ; the natural life ; the natural character ; this will be the matter for consideration now. The word "natural" is one of the loose words that are taken in many senses, and yet though indefinite, bear distinct masses of meaning to the minds that use them. In the usage of religion the word natural is associated with a well understood theory of the world according to which the moral powers are distributed in two vast groups that stand over against one another as white and black, good and evil, true and false. Nature represents the dark, false, evil power. It is contrasted with spirit, the supernatural, the divine. The natural world is described as the world of blind force, law, determination. The natural life is described as a life of impulse, instinct, passion, animal desire. The natural man is described as the man of passionate cravings,

of will uncontrolled, of affection unregulated ; not necessarily as a violent, lustful, or bad man, but as one who yields to the promptings of his instinctive or inherited constitution. This use of the word came from the New Testament.

Paul set up a threefold constitution of man ; taught that human nature consisted of three departments. He spoke of the "carnal man," the "psychical man," and the "spiritual man." The "carnal man" was also described as "fleshly," "sold under sin." He was thought of as simply animal, bestial, a mass of irrational desires and unguided tendencies, selfish, lustful, violent, greedy, inclined to excesses of every description, inconsiderate, unreflecting, destructive, unconscious of any law higher than that of the "members ;" without sympathy or conscience ; wholly insensible to good influences ; a creature of organization, a child of Satan. The "spiritual man" was pictured as the opposite of all this ; as pure, noble, gentle, sweet, humane, temperate, keenly susceptible to every form of goodness, loyal to principle, enamored of ideal excellence, aspiring, hoping, loving, sympathizing, worshipping, generous, brave, self-denying, in close allegiance with the "heavenly man," the "spirit." The "natural, or psychical man" stands, in Paul's conception, midway between these two,—neither carnal, nor spiritual, rather, as we



should say, "sensible," intelligent, reasonable; not coarse, violent, gross, lascivious; not aspiring, hopeful or humane; a "man of the world," discreet, prudent, calculating, interested in his health, wealth and earthly felicity,—circumspect and wary, living in to-day, to-morrow, the day after to-morrow, possibly, but not reckoning on any distant future; decent, respectable, proper, conventional, wise in judgment, diligent in affairs, practical; not of necessity unrefined or uncultivated, but without the fine enthusiasm for ideas and principles that exalts the character above the level of the commonplace. The natural man, he declares, can know nothing about divine things. They are foolishness unto him, because they must be spiritually discerned.

As the wood-chopper cannot be expected to be an artist; as the trader is incapacitated for being an abstract philosopher; as the operations of the financier are uncongenial with the pursuits of the higher æsthetics, so the man whose thoughts and ambitions are fixed on the outward advantages of current, civilized existence will be a stranger in the realm of faith, hope and anticipation.

Christian divines have echoed Paul's teaching, but were not as careful as he was to distinguish between "natural" and "carnal." The popular preachers confound where he discriminated. The natural

man is described in sermons as the man of instinct, impulse, passion, organic tendency and force; man as a natural product; cultivated, it may be, elegant, graceful, good hearted; but selfish, conceited, indulgent, luxurious, comfort loving, limited in desire to such good things as society can furnish. In impassioned discourse, the negative side of him is put forward, to the exclusion of every other; he is made out to be narrow, avaricious, hard, inhuman, indifferent to the suffering and misery of his fellow men, engrossed in purely personal affairs. The word "natural" is applied to such a man in a theological sense, not in a scientific sense. Nature, as we are accustomed to think of it under the light of scientific research, as a scheme of causes and effects, a system of organized laws, has had no place in the conceptions of the theological mind. It is another word used to describe unconscious or fateful force. "Natural" is only a more decent term for "animal." The notion has been carried to absurd exaggerations that shocked the judgment of reasonable people.

A reaction followed, and a reaction that went to an equal extreme in the opposite direction. Nature, from being a term expressive of all that was crude, low, and evil, came to be used as a term expressive of all that was simple, sweet and good; and the natural man, instead of being a mean, base, sensual

man, was described as pure, innocent, blameless, virtuous; the conception of nature still being the old theological conception, the modern scientific conception not having yet come in. The reaction was begun by Rousseau, the eloquent prophet of sentimentalism, whose writings produced such a wide and profound sensation in Europe, three-quarters of a century ago, and have so essentially modified the religious and social ideas of the whole modern world. Rousseau had scarcely more definite ideas of nature than his opponents had; his knowledge of it was small, his study of it was hasty. He simply joined issue with the current doctrine about it. He deified what the orthodox denounced; he worshipped what they scorned. With him the word "nature" expressed all that was salutary and excellent. Natural usages were wholesome usages; natural influences were beneficent influences; natural laws were wise, just, saving laws. He held that the state of nature was originally a state of innocence, and that a return to the state of nature would be a return to a state of innocence; and the drift of his passionate exhortation was that people should cast off the restraints imposed by civilized usages and should let nature regulate conduct, and make laws. Having, as I have said, no scientific knowledge of nature, no practical acquaintance with the organization of hu-



man society, no philosophical view of institutions, he ran into strange vagaries, and laid down the most absurd rules, was as unreasonable in his way as the orthodox were in theirs, and swiftly brought his doctrine into discredit; but the doctrine was fascinating and multitudes were fascinated by it. Much of his criticism was sagacious, much of his denunciation was just; much of his exhortation was wise; his suggestions in regard to the nurture of children and the education of the young were often of solid value, and his vindication of natural rights struck a chord that found response in the best hearts.

The doctrine of Rousseau is the modern doctrine. The modern *doctrinaires*, disciples of Rousseau, merely reverse as he did the orthodox positions. They reject the "supernatural," they discard revelation, they turn a deaf ear to the preaching of "divine" truth. Taking "nature," "natural" as defined by the theologians, they fill the words with glorious meanings. To obey nature, to think, feel, act, in accordance with nature, to consult nature, and follow her leading, sums up their philosophy of virtue. Instinct is with them inspiration; desire is prophetic; impulse is divine intimation; appetite and aspiration are one. It is enough that nature enjoins a thing for them to approve it. To come closer to the matter:

The natural is contrasted with the artificial. The natural man is contrasted with the conventional man, the creature of custom, routine and usage. Whatever is artificial and conventional excites ridicule. Dress, behavior, manners, rules, statutes, stand for what is unnatural. Civilized existence is a favorite subject of caricature. Here is the old theological confusion again. Paul, by mapping off human nature into three divisions, seems to have fancied that every man had three natures, each with laws of its own. The Christian divine fancied that by using the phrases "natural" and "supernatural," he actually cut man in two, and was dealing with two separate beings, when he was dealing only with one. The terms "natural" and "supernatural," simply describe stages of development in the same man; they do not describe different men. The preacher plays tricks with words. Whatever may be meant by natural, preternatural, super-natural, they include no more than nature itself includes; nature comprehends the whole of it. The words indicate pigeon holes, into which certain qualities are put for convenient reference; but all the pigeon-holes are in the same cabinet.

The modern sentimentalist makes the same mistake of confounding words with things. Things artificial, he calls things unnatural. But art is nature



under other forms. Nature and art do not occupy different worlds; they occupy the same world. Nature contains all the materials that art uses; all the methods that art employs; all the ends that art serves; all the possibilities that art attempts; Nature comprises everything that man has or can have; it comprehends man himself, who is a child of nature. Art creates nothing separate from nature; adds no element or power to nature; but simply makes use of nature, takes advantage of it, shows what its tendencies and possibilities are. It does not even improve upon nature. That were impossible; it merely discerns and conforms with it. By the laws of nature, the ship floats on the surface of the water; by the laws of nature it sinks when the water, in too large quantity, gets into its hold. By the laws of nature, the barge drifts with the current of the stream; by the laws of nature the sailing vessel goes in the direction of the wind; by the laws of nature the steamer sets current and wind at defiance, and goes whither the pilot directs. By the laws of nature bodies grow, and by the laws of nature they decay. By the laws of nature the rushing river divides states and makes opposite shores unattainable; by the laws of nature, the bridge is built which connects the shores together. It is art that builds the ship, contrives the steamer, constructs the bridge,

combining and shaping materials which nature furnishes. Art is nature justifying herself; nature revealed and applied. And so long as art does this, her achievements, far from being a violation of nature's laws, are an exhibition of them. The more art the more nature; the more perfect art the more evident nature, and the more admirable.

Artificial life may therefore be natural life. It ceases to be so when it loses sight of facts and utilities, and indulges in whims and vagaries of its own, thinking only of meretricious effects; as when a builder erects a house beautiful to look at but unfit to live in; or an artist paints a picture in defiance of the laws of light and the rules of proportion; or a writer produces a work in which the literary skill is eminent, but the ideas are so hidden as to be unavailable for instruction or entertainment; or a costumer designs a dress without the slightest reference to the actual need or comfort of the wearer; a hat that leaves the head exposed, a boot it is impossible to walk in, skirts that collect the dirt of the sidewalk, and fling it upon the person, a coat that pinions the arms or compresses the chest. This is artifice, not art or nature.

There is a good deal of this in our civilization, which, in nature's holy name should be protested against. But civilization itself does not come under

this reproach. Civilization is nature carried as far as art sees clearly the way. Conventional usages are not necessarily unnatural. Why not eat when you are hungry, cries one, instead of making believe you are hungry because the time has come to eat? Because such an arrangement would be inconsistent with other arrangements, would in fact, be fatal to all arrangement, would throw daily existence into chaos. All are not hungry at the same hour; the feeling of hunger is transferable from one part of the day to another; we become hungry when it is convenient to be hungry; the natural time for being hungry is when the satisfaction of hunger can be provided for with most convenience. We are hungry at dinner time. The peasant is hungry at noon, the citizen in the late afternoon. We may say the same of dress.

To the rustic, the life of the citizen seems unnatural; but possibly it is no more unnatural than his own. The rustic rises at four, dines at twelve, goes to bed at eight, dresses in loose clothes, eats plain food, lives all day in the open air. The citizen rises at eight or nine, dines at six, passes the evening in society, amusement or study, goes to bed at twelve or one, dresses trig and tight, has a various table, with elaborate cooking and imported wines, and is most of the day within doors. The citizen



lives as long as the rustic, enjoys as good health, and has a vastly richer and more satisfactory existence. Nature is elastic, adaptable, full of possibilities, able to accommodate itself to new worlds of circumstance; and who shall undertake to say that anybody who consults the exigencies of life, and conforms to its requirements as the day prescribes them is violating nature, however odd and fantastical the product of his art may look to another? The artificial existence may be the natural existence, after all is said; not ultimately and completely natural,—that cannot be said yet of anything human,—but the nearest to nature thus far attainable. Every conventional usage that is extensively prevalent, or for considerable periods permanent, is recommended by some natural service it renders, and is pronounced unnatural and abandoned when the service is rendered no longer. Society is a natural product, civilization is a natural product; when they cease to ensure the purposes of nature, they decay, as artificial things must.

Again, natural is contrasted with moral. The “naturalist” disbelieves in custom, law and statute. The thought of obligation is repugnant to him, conscience suggests restraint and limitation. He complains that the moral law, as it is called, is an arbitrary imposition to which he ought not to be

compelled or expected or asked to submit. Why all this pother he cries, about duty, responsibility, truth, goodness? Why all this fuss about virtue? The idea is overworked. Nature knows nothing of "ought" and "must;" she is not bound by priests and parsons: she is free, spontaneous, flowing; she obeys no decree; is held to no accountability. Give nature her head; she knows where she is going, and what she wants; she will justify herself. This is the talk of the sensual; thus argues the voluptuary, the sot, the free lover. Said one to me, 'I am my own master and judge. My nature is supreme above all conventionalities, moral or other:' said another, 'what do I care, or why should I care for the approval or the disapproval of people who declare it incumbent on me to do this or that? My nature bids me do otherwise, tells me to act out my inclinations; my inclinations lead me to indolence, and indulgence; indolent and indulgent, I will be.'

This style of argument would be reasonable in one who lived by himself, with only his own nature to consult. But in the mouth of one who lives in society, in a state of nature complicated, systematic, and regular, it has no intelligible meaning. The moral law is the law that society finds most natural. It is an attempt at expressing in systematic form the natural requirements of social existence.



Laws, statutes, ordinances, regulations are nature's efforts at order, tranquillity and progress. Nature prompts the "rough" to plunder and commit violence. Hungry, he steals; in case of necessity perpetrates burglary, kills. To him it seems unnatural that he should be punished for it. Prisons are unnatural; the gallows is unnatural. Nature bids the good citizen earn his living, respect the rights of property, be sober and industrious, abstain from violence; and to him the life of the desperado, the bohemian is an outrage against all the laws of nature. Art may have done very little as yet in the way of combining natural forces so as to make them conspire for the well-being and happiness of man; but its intention has been good; it has done what it could under the circumstances; it is continually improving; and every step it takes is in the direction of a better natural condition, in which there shall be no "roughs" and no "bohemians." Nature creates society; and society creates morality, with the best endeavor to bring into play every repairing and beneficent power.

The wiser laws, the more merciful statutes, the more humane punishments that man devises for the administration of his affairs, are efforts to bring natural agencies practically to bear on the problems of vice and crime that press so heavily on human

society. Mr. Mill arraigns nature with terrible severity for the pitilessness with which she persecutes mankind, for the barbarous cruelty of her ordinances, which have regard neither to justice, to expediency, nor to mercy ; ordinances so harsh and so irrational that to ascribe them to an intelligent being is impossible. But these ordinances are entitled to be called "natural" alone in view of the brute, inorganic, fateful system that precedes the introduction of human thought, feeling and will. It is nature *unmodified by man* that Mr. Mill brings to judgment. But nature unmodified by man is incomplete, crude, savage nature. In man nature comes to herself. Human powers supplement her elements. When these intervene, other forces are disclosed ; other agencies are developed. Nature reveals new intentions and capacities ; her energies are modified, classified, combined, guided to new issues. Her fury is tamed ; her destructiveness is overruled. Humanity, which is herself in another form, adds what before had been wanting, a kind feeling, a beneficent intent, a love of equity, a tendency to improvement, and at once there is order where there had been chaos, and will where there had been force. Nature works still, but comprehensively. Man naturalizes nature, so to speak,—humanizes it, spiritualizes it, shows what there is of divine in it.

And as man becomes more human himself, nature becomes more natural. Law deepens and ascends and embraces, till

Conscious Law is king of kings.

Every improvement in arrangements, every amelioration of codes, every rational mitigation of penalties, every substitution of gentleness for violence, of compassion for cruelty, every movement in the direction of human fraternity is evidence that nature is justifying herself. Even the barbarities of former days were endeavors at a system of retributions which should be precisely adapted to natural emergencies: and as those barbarities are one by one put aside by the more careful experiments and the wiser economies of mankind, the method of nature appears in fuller completeness.

It appears then that nature and art cannot fairly be set in opposition. The natural cannot be contrasted with the artificial: for the artificial may be truly natural. It cannot be contrasted with the moral, for that too is natural or an approach to it. Natural and supernatural cannot be set over against each other: for the supernatural so-called is but the natural raised to a higher power. Nature comprehends all possibilities of power, whether physical, mental or moral, all heights and depths of being. Emerson in one of his earliest poems wrote—



Out from the heart of Nature rolled  
The burdens of the Bible old,  
The litanies of nations came  
Like the volcano's tongue of flame,  
Up from the burning core below,  
The canticles of love and woe.  
The temples grew as grows the grass ;  
Art might obey, but not surpass.

The talk of subduing nature is foolish. Equally so is the talk of improving nature. The only duty to be regarded is that of studying and conforming with nature; understanding what her ways and requirements are, and complying with them. Nature has no fixed standard which can be appealed to, no definite code of rules to be followed. She is undiscovered by us, and of course inimitable by us. She is to be developed, not copied. It is folly for any class of men to set up their standards or methods, and demand acquiescence in them or respect for them on the ground that they are natural. It is glaring folly for the crudest and least developed to claim authority for what *they* are pleased to call natural. Natural it may be as far as it goes, but it goes so little way that it is not worth mentioning. The jelly fish is natural, but it will scarcely be accepted as a type of organized being. The tadpole is natural, but interesting only as prophecy. The gigantic lizards of the saurian epoch were natural,

but we are glad that nature has done with them for some hundreds of thousands of years. The pterodactyl and ornithorynchus were natural, but as we look at the pictures of them in books of geology, it is hard to regard them as anything but cruel jokes and caricatures of organic beings.

Nature shows what she is when the arts of culture are applied to her. This is familiar knowledge. The gardenér takes the wild flower from the field where it struggles for its life with wind and cold and shadow and unfriendly soil, transfers it to a sheltered place, provides it with the air and light it needs, enough and no more, mingles proper soil for it, and produces a flower so much deeper in color, so much richer in leaf, so much heavier in perfume, that it is hardly recognized as being the same plant. He has added nothing ; he has simply combined and adjusted. Nature did all, under natural conditions which gave her a chance to show what she could accomplish.

The fruit grower prunes and trims his pear tree, removes the superfluous leaves, picks off the earliest fruit, lops the twigs, reduces the length of the small boughs, and as a result produces pears of wonderful size and delicious flavor. He has played no trick on nature, but having discovered how nature works to best advantage, supplies the conditions that were refused by the circumstances in which the tree had



been placed. The orchard is a contrivance for favoring and assisting nature. Nature works more powerfully there than she does outside. The hot-house is nature applied, not nature defeated ; nature helped, not nature hindered.

Mr. Darwin writes a book to show how animals change under domestication ; a very interesting and instructive book it is ; a book that throws a flood of light on the capabilities of nature. The animals are taken from what are commonly called "natural" conditions, and submitted to what are regarded as artificial ones, and they take on new qualities that they were never supposed to possess even in possibility. Are these qualities then supernatural ? Are the animals less natural than they were ? Are they not more natural ? Do they not approach more nearly to nature's intention in the organization of their bodies ? Every one of our domestic animals is so different from its remote ancestor as apparently to belong to another species. Yet the remote ancestor contained the prophecy of it. Their present condition is to our regard their natural condition, but the time may come when it will seem unnatural.

Man undergoes the same transformations. We speak of human nature as if it was a constant quality ; but it is variable like all other nature. It changes with climate, food, social and political cir-

cumstances; changes so much that it does not recognize itself in different parts of the world; nurture, education, training, experience, influences of travel and social culture, not merely transform, but transfigure humanity till it no more resembles the crude manhood of the peasant or the savage, than the garden rose resembles the wild rose of the way side, whose thin and precarious leaf drops from its stem without provocation. Even Rousseau, the prophet of nature, has his methods for justifying the perfectibility of man. He did not believe that human nature was a stationary, a constant thing. Our efforts are bent,—in the matter of education especially,—to the discovery of better methods than have been employed hitherto for developing the capabilities of the human creature; and all these methods are marked by one character, that of naturalness. Their design is to educe, lead out, develop from the earliest practical period, the faculties of intelligence, to substitute knowledge for ignorance, power for weakness, and reason for instinct. Nature is better exhibited in the man than in the boy, in the boy than in the child. And nature is better exhibited in the cultivated man than in the uncultivated. The sentimental idea that heaven lies about us in our infancy; that our passage from the nursery to the shop, is a fall; that shades of the prison house close around

the growing boy ; that the gain in experience is a lapse from nature, belongs to a philosophy that is passing away. The philosophy that is taking its place, holds that the expulsion from Eden was a gain ; that in much wisdom, is much satisfaction ; that he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth joy, and that access to the fulness of life is initiation into the opportunities and privileges of nature.

In a word, the "natural" man is the perfect man ; man developed, not man in the embryo ; man at the limit of his possibility, not man at the commencement of his career.

The natural man proves himself such by the fidelity with which he observes the conditions of health. Invalidism, sickness, premature decrepitude and death are unnatural. Nature favors vitality, buoyancy, length of happy days. Dissipation of whatever kind, is the sin against nature. The epicurean is the monster. The drunkard is the prodigy. Nature beautifies and preserves. Not that health of body is, as some think, nature's crowning glory—a magnificent torso is no sign of grace,—health is a sign of naturalness, only so far as the healthy man is the natural man "in the flesh." He may be the unnatural man in the spirit ; for he may be stupid, pompous, blustering, ignorant, coarse, low-lived, a fine animal, and only that, admirable as a specimen of



what air, exercise, and meat will do, but insignificant enough as a specimen of what education, culture and discipline may do. The prize fighter is not the type of human perfection. Boating clubs and base ball clubs are an improvement on the scholar's cloistered seclusion, and a help in the development of the natural man; but at best, they make a beginning in blood, bone and muscle. How far they promote the end, is yet to be seen.

The "natural" man is the cultivated man. We hear of "natural fools," meaning by the phrase fools so desperate that nature can do nothing for them. Knowledge puts men in communication with nature, gives them command of its resources. The brain belongs to the animal economy, and if the brain be unorganized, the man is to that extent unnatural. To that extent he is cut off from the natural world, and reduced to the condition of a zoöphyte. The world of literature opens the most glorious domain of nature, and to be cut off from that is to be banished to Siberian regions where there is nature indeed, but gloomy and savage. Take the matter in its purely physical aspect, as concerning the development of the nervous system, so delicate at once and so powerful, the centre of such tremendous energies, the source of such exquisite enjoyments,—the condition of the person in whom it is not educated to some

considerable degree is limited by narrow lines; the condition of the person in whom it is educated highly, is privileged and glorious almost beyond the description of words.

The "natural" man is the sympathetic man; because we are human beings. Nature puts us in relations to one another; solitariness and isolation are revolting to her; the wider the relations are, the more completely Nature's arrangements are fulfilled; and the closer they are, provided the width is not compromised thereby, the more satisfactorily her requisitions are met; consequently the cordial sympathetic man is natural. The natural parent is the judiciously kind parent; the unnatural parent is the parent who deserts the child. Coldness, bitterness, hatred, aversion, contempt, are inhuman, therefore unnatural. Compassion, considerateness, forbearance, are human, therefore natural. Men talk of unnatural cruelty, never of unnatural kindness; unnatural violence, never of unnatural gentleness. The law of repulsion may be called natural so long as circumstances justify it; but if all the circumstances were known, they probably never would justify it. In the state of society the poets picture, the wolf lies down with the lamb, and the leopard with the kid. Hatred and cynicism are creatures of misunderstanding. When one said the other day



that for his part, he had withdrawn himself from his fellow-men, and taken refuge in nature, bathing in the sunlight, inhaling the air, suffering the days to pass in unanxious enjoyment with children among the trees, letting society manage its own affairs, it was a confession of retirement from nature, not of return to it. He was returning to the elements, to the raw material of nature, to the crude beginnings of things; he was retreating from the higher walks which the same elements, combined and organized, made beautiful. It is natural to take an interest in human concerns, to live in them and help them on. Benevolence is natural; philanthropy is natural; the reforming spirit is natural; wild it may be, ill considered, temporally and incidentally mischievous; still it is natural; if its method be unnatural, knowledge will improve it; the mistake will be corrected, and the correction will be in the order of nature.

The "natural" man is the good man; not the conventionally good man; not the devout man of any particular communion; not the pious man of any special ecclesiastical type, whose goodness may consist in his being good for nothing; but the true, brave, self-respecting man, the man of principle, the man of submissive will to the supreme beauty. I would say the saint is the natural man, if the word

saint had not been used to describe the most unnatural type of man that was ever recommended.

But I will not push the description into these purely ideal realms. Let it suffice to believe that the natural man is the perfect man. If such a man has never lived in history, if he is yet to come, and the time of his coming is so distant that even the most daring prophecy cannot tell the probable time of his advent, this is but another form of the declaration, that nature has all possibilities within her, and that her method will lead to the final felicity. The prophesy of the natural man may be audacious, but prophecies as audacious have been fulfilled, and in the reason of things there is nothing to falsify the hope that the "earnest expectation of the creature," may be justified by the "manifestation of the Sons of God."

## THE GLORIFIED MAN.

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THERE is but one subject that appeals to us on Easter morning, the morning of the resurrection,—the subject of the immortal life;—a subject old as the oldest, new as the newest; always fresh, always interesting, always of vital concern to all classes of mankind; to the philosophical as well as to the simple, to the wise as well as to the foolish, to the great equally with the small, to the noble and powerful no less than to the ignoble and the weak; interesting to the good, as opening an endless promise of reward and benefaction; interesting to the evil, as holding before them the tremendous anticipation of doom; interesting to all who live: for life is the great interest,—life with its capacities and its outlooks, its yearnings and its capabilities, its issues and its destinies. To live according to their conception of living is the desire of all; to live exhaustively is the desire of the greatest and the best.

The belief in immortality is a belief that men

never reason themselves into, and will never reason themselves out of; a belief that cannot be justified fairly by argument, cannot be unjustified either by argument. It comes and goes, flows and ebbs, according to secret laws of the mind which have never been traced. If we try to reason it down, we persuade ourselves of its truth; if we try to reason ourselves into a belief in its truth, we come to disbelieve it. Every argument starts objections; every objection starts argument. The trail runs off in the most unexpected directions, and lands us in the most unlooked for conclusions. Talking with an Evangelical clergyman, the editor of a religious paper, who had recently met with a severe bereavement, I heard with astonishment his confession that he was not sure; he doubted; had grave misgivings; faith gave way under pressure. Talking some time afterwards with an avowed materialist who had met with a similar bereavement, I was equally surprised at hearing him say that he on his side was not sure of his doctrine of annihilation. He could not prove it. Immortality might be true after all. The intellect reaches its limit—comes against a wall that it cannot see over; but the heart believes, springs across the barrier and finds other worlds. Can we think, he said, that when this toil and turmoil are done, all is over; the heart says, No; the sentiments protest



against it; feeling passes beyond the bounds of knowledge, argument, reason, and insists upon the hereafter. So it is; we believe, and we disbelieve, according to our moods of mind; and neither the believer nor the unbeliever can justify himself fairly at the bar of reason. Our anticipation reflects our being.

The faith in this transfiguration is all but universal. It hangs round the minds of people who imagine they have discarded it altogether, and will not be dispelled. With us, the question of to-day is not the resurrection of the Christ; that has but small interest to the best minds of our generation. It is interesting to Christians, who imagine that their own hope of the resurrection depends upon the faith in the Christ. But the doctrine of the resurrection of the Christ is interesting only to those who so believe. It is a limited doctrine; a doctrine of evangelical Christendom; the doctrine of a sect, a denomination, not a doctrine of humanity. The resurrection of the Christ does not concern us as human beings, but simply as technical believers in the incarnation and miraculous glorification of the Son of Man. Our interest is in the immortality of the soul, the immortality of the rational part, the imperishableness of the ideal element, of that which makes us to be men; of our essential prerogative, not of our incidental ac-



cessories. We have no faith in the immortality of the flesh, in the resurrection of the body. We know as matter of fact, that when the body dies, there is an end of that, as an organized form. We know that it is dissipated in a thousand ways ; that it mingles with the elements of nature, disappears in the air, passes into the clod ; that the vital force that is treasured up in its bulk assumes other forms, takes on other shapes, becomes infinitely transfigured and diversified. The belief in the resurrection of the body is peculiarly the belief of those who must have a body that can suffer in the hereafter.

Neither are we interested in the hereafter of our temporary accidents. We do not hope that people will carry their luggage with them into another state of existence. We are not concerned that we shall go "bag and baggage" into the world to come. The colossal shopkeeper leaves his accessories behind him when he dies, like the meanest man in the city. His marble palace, his halls and galleries, his buildings of of stone, wood and iron, his vast warehouses covering acres of ground and occupying cubic acres of space, vanish at the moment of death like the stuff that dreams are made of : he cannot take an ounce of all his gold. What has he to do now with warehouses and goods, silks and velvets, cambrics and laces, coarse goods for the multitude, purple and fine

linen for the sumptuous? What has he to do now with ships and importations, home and foreign, with transactions that occupy men in distant parts of the earth, and investments that lead to colossal fortunes! What place is there now for the technical memory that never lost sight of a bale of cloth or a bundle of remnants? What room is there for the exercise of that tremendous organizing force which was felt in all the markets of the civilized world, when material things, visible people and tangible results have passed away forever? When the body goes, all that belongs to the body goes,—houses and lands, estates and enterprises. The people stood for days looking at the dead shopkeeper's house and wondering that death should have the audacity to smite down a man of that enormous wealth. But death had no more hesitation in doing that than the maid has in sweeping the glittering cobwebs from a gaudy chamber. Nothing but the *pure man* lasts. What was there of him? What was his heart made of? Had his conscience the stuff to endure? How much humanity had he? That is the only question that interests men. Emerson says: "I find that what is called great and powerful life,—the administration of large affairs, in commerce, in the courts, in the state,—is prone to develope a narrow and special talent; but unless combined with a certain ~~contem~~

plative turn, a taste for abstract truth, for the moral laws—does not build up faith or lead to content.” The only question worth considering is, whether what makes us human beings, men and women, what dignifies us as such, and glorifies us as such, as distinct from the animals, lives, persists, endures, when the organization is dissolved.

There is a growth of scepticism in our days, a disbelief in God and the hereafter, more than there ever has been before. There are more people than there ever were on the globe before. There are more people who think than there ever were. Is this scepticism due to science? I cannot believe it. The scientific people are few; the knowledge of science is as yet small, and not extensively diffused. The number of people who have pursued scientific investigation so far that they have reached the dim borderland that lies between matter and mind, and are feeling after the fine threads that link together the two, is so small that we can almost count them on our fingers, and the result of their speculations is known to the small number who are interested in these subtlest inquiries of the human mind. The prevalent scepticism is due, as I believe, not to scientific knowledge, to a stage of inquiry, or a stage of conclusion, but rather to the general character of modern life, which is not reflective, speculative or ideal, but which is—



to use a common and rather unmeaning phrase—material, or in milder phrase, external. Men who are dealing all the time with temporary and incidental affairs, with politics, commerce, trade, finance, are naturally uninterested in questions that concern the higher problems of intellect. The business of making money, carried on as it is in modern communities, even when perfectly honest, reputable, justifiable and necessary, nevertheless is, by its engrossing character, discouraging to the entertainment of abstract questions. The natural gravitation of the mind of a generation like ours is towards a distinct repudiation of speculative beliefs. Yet the peculiarity of such a generation is not so much that men disbelieve as that they do not consider. We have not answered the problem; rather, we have not entertained it. We do not solve the mystery; we simply do not ponder it. We give the question the go-by; failing to meditate it we lose our interest in it, and losing our interest in it, gradually find ourselves in the posture of men who discredit it. As for positive, reasoning disbelief, there is not so much of it that it cannot be swept away again by a returning wave of faith.

The interesting thing, as we study the history of belief in immortality, is the increasing nobleness of the belief; the growing majesty and beauty of it, the glorifying aspect of it. Thus contemplated,

so far from losing hold upon the human mind, it is gaining. If it does not become more universal it becomes more splendid ; it occupies a grander position ; is more elevating to the being.

We can trace this gradual elevation of the faith by successive steps in its progress. Go back to the warlike ages, as, for instance, among the ancient Germans, of whom we have sufficiently accurate accounts, and we find that among them *immortality*—by which were meant victory and felicity, for nothing else is worth calling immortality—was limited to the brave, the heroic, the magnanimous, whether vanquishers or vanquished. They who died what was called the “straw death,”—the timid, the cowards, the people who died in their beds, had nothing to hope for in the hereafter. No glory awaited them. But they who fell in battle, by the “spear death,” entered at once into the companionship of the brave and the glorious, and passed the joyous years in such happiness as they could best appreciate.

If we apply to an intellectual people we find a different standard of belief. Thus, one of the most intellectual books of the world, the Buddhist *Dhammapada*, records that right thoughts are the condition of the life everlasting ; the thinker never dies. There is pleasure, satisfaction, immortal satisfaction and pleasure for those who love and seek the truth, for the un-



selfish minds who loftily inquire. Pass to another region of mind and life, and we have still another idea. In the early history of the Hebrew people there apparently was no vital belief in personal immortality; that is, no belief that took hold on the faith of the people. They lived in time; the promises made to them were terrestrial; health and wealth; long life; children and grandchildren to perpetuate the name. But as the race grew older in experience, was submitted to diminution and sorrow, broken up into personalities as it were, the inextinguishable longing came; a deeper belief took possession of the best minds of the nation, and worked itself into the nation's heart. There is reason to think, however, that, consciously or unconsciously, the Jews made the inheritance of Israel and fidelity to Israel, the condition of blessedness hereafter. The promise was made to Abraham and his seed, to no others. In the Talmud there occur sentences like this; "Abraham will sit at the gate of hell and prevent any Israelite from going in;" and in another passage, this: "The soul of a single Israelite is worth more than all the souls of a whole nation of Gentiles." Jesus seems to have limited the anticipation in the same way. He proclaimed no universal, no strictly human immortality. He does not make the hope a hope of felicity within spiritual reach of all men. According to Matthew, when the Sad-

ducees, who disbelieved in the resurrection, thought to confound him, and quoted the Bible against him, he replied ; " Is it not written, ' I am the God of Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob ? But God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.' " Therefore, the inference is, Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob, and all the children of Abraham Isaac and Jacob are still alive. By this reasoning Jesus limits the promise and expectation to the descendants of the patriarchs. Nor is this all. The promise that he made by virtue of his own Messiahship limited the hope of immortality to those who believed in Him. " I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whoso liveth and believeth in me shall never die." " As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, even so everyone that believeth in me shall live by me." These words limit the hope of immortality to true believers, namely, to Christians.

This Paul certainly did. Paul distinctly took the ground that immortality, the immortal life, immortal joy, beauty, felicity, belonged to those who had faith in the Christ, and to those alone. He was a Pharisee of the strictest school. He believed in the resurrection after the fashion of the Pharisees of his day. But theirs seems to have been a contemplative, shadowy, dim and unfruitful hope. The com-

mon Israelite was supposed to go to a shadowy land where there was but a flickering ray of consciousness, a faint scintillation of being; no positive thought, no actual enjoyment, no definite pursuit or purpose, no steady looking towards a grander state; only a silent, mysterious waiting for something when the Christ should come. According to the faith of Paul, this period of suspense had been broken; the doorway had been opened into a grander and more glorious hereafter; hear him: "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." "Christ the first fruits; afterwards, they that be Christ's at his coming." This was his belief; all the belief he had. Paul never dreamed that any who had not faith in Christ should enjoy felicity hereafter. Thus narrow was his doctrine; but he held it so nobly, he meant so much by faith in Christ, that it fairly transfigured his thought; his idea, though restricted, was more splendid, more vital and inspiring than had been reached before, or has been since. They that are joined with Christ, he says, are new creatures. Old things are passed away. They have put on the new man, are born again of the spirit. They have the native graces of love, faith, joy, patience, long suffering, meekness, temperance. They are perfect in every gift. They are transfigured into the likeness of their Head and par-



take of his glory. For them there are no terrors; for them there is no grave; the grave is vanquished; death is disarmed. Instead of dissolution there is change. The moral transformation carries the physical with it. All that was material seemed floating away in light. The vision lasted only a moment, but while it lasted it glorified every particle of human dust. The dream disappeared almost in a day; in less than a life-time; and yet, while it was entertained, it filled the soul with a sunshine that no vapors could chill. How heartily the disciples rejoiced in this faith! There was no night to them. They believed that any day they might hear the trumpet sound, and see the radiant forms gather, and feel their bodies becoming lighter as the spirit penetrated them, and then float upward, deathless, into the empyrean. In the happy air they should meet their Lord. While those that had died before the coming should feel the eternal life throb and thrill in their ashes, those who were living on the surface of the planet should be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and all mount together.

The cold morning dawned; the vision passed away, but a nobler hope came in;—nobler, because more universal.

The next step in the belief, as we trace it, was

from the christian to the human. Immortality is held to be a gift to all men, the privilege of all souls, by virtue of the humanity which they share; in possibility, though not in fact; in germ, though not in flower or fruit. This is a nobler faith, the faith of the noblest men and women of to-day,—that nothing human ever dies; that though bowed and burdened, and all but crushed under the accidents of the temporal lot, character, affection, truthfulness, high capacity, the qualities of manhood, vanquish death, and lay hold upon a long hereafter. The faith is that every person is born to a grand future if he will accept it; not destined to it, but created for it; that every one is conscious at moments, or may be conscious, of possessing in possibility all that the wise and excellent of mankind have illustrated. Those who entertain this faith believe that men are limited and dwarfed by their earthly environment; that many of their best purposes come to nothing because no opportunity is given for their growth; that many an aspiration goes unfulfilled because there is no atmosphere for its wings to play in. They say the sublimest of possibilities slumber in clods; and they believe that when the limitations are put off, these possibilities will have a chance to show themselves as they are. They do not expect immortality for that is mortal in us,—for our repinings, or our



selfishness, for our lust, or our grief, but for that which is intrinsically immortal, which we cannot conceive as banished or annihilated.

But there is another phase of the faith still, entertained by the very few, for not a great many are capable as yet of comprehending its full significance; it will be a faith more widely entertained perhaps by and by;—the faith of the so-called positivists, whose idea of immortality is a growing, spreading, deepening love for their kind; the immortality, not of the individual, not of the person, but of the quality; an immortality of being. They say we live as an aggregate of beings; our lives are not separate lives, but organic lives; society is one; the race is one; we inherit all that has gone before; we add our contribution to all that is passing and comes after; every deed of ours mingles with the current of life; every thought, every purpose, adds its part in making the future what it is to be. This is the faith that George Eliot eloquently expressed in poetry. It is the faith of certain very deep philosophic minds,—minds of cool temperament, of slow affection, of small individual feeling; minds of weak personal hold on life; indifferent, joyless, yet earnest. It is the faith of many whose lives are toilsome, who believe that what they do with all their might, as well as they can, their honest contribution to the future, is their immortal career. It is a

noble faith ; a faith devoid of egotism, strained, purged of all that is inhuman, in the true sense lofty, spiritual. They who live on this idea look down with a serene but scornful glance upon the average idea of an immortal life. They charge upon it several very grave faults. They charge upon it, first, the sin of selfishness. They say that the average idea and hope of the hereafter are through and through egotistical ; that the hope turns upon individual anticipation, personal hope, private desire, the animal craving for more life, more enjoyment, more pleasure, power, excitement ; more sensitive delectation, a larger amount of whatever it is that makes this life good ; that it makes much of *mine* and *thine* ; that it circumscribes the humanity of the individual, instead of diffusing it. Towards the end of Jesus' career, so we read in the Gospels, a woman came to him, bringing her two sons, and said : " We have a favor to ask," " What is it ? " said the master ; " Grant," she urged " that these two boys may sit, one on your right hand, and the other on your left, when you come into your kingdom." To these ambitious followers, Jesus replied : " I have nothing to do with sitting on thrones, at my right hand or on my left ; that is a privilege for those who are prepared by faithful service to receive it." The rebuke that Jesus administered to the wayward, self-seeking woman, these serene souls feel like adminis-

tering to men and women who think of the hereafter as promising a longer indulgence to their private feelings, a longer gratification of their private desires and individual longings.

It is for this reason that minds of this stamp are indifferent to the phenomena of "Spiritualism." Even if they find themselves unable to deny the truth of the manifestations, the idea that Spiritualism spreads before them of the hereafter, is discouraging rather than inspiring, and displeasing rather than attractive. It is not comprehensive enough; it lacks elevation; it opens no heaven. This Spiritualism, they say, makes immortality a section of the natural history of man—an extension of his temporal existence; reduces it to an appendix, a supplement, a formal and mechanical continuance of the present life. But we do not need, they say, or ask a continuance of the present life; we want more life, grander life, a larger world, heavens that are uplifted high above the earth, opportunities that are only dreamed of here, privileges that are pure gold, not mixed with lead and clay; a future life that is diversified and glorious, with mountains and valleys, oceans and sparkling streams, singing birds and overhanging starry vaults, full of sunlight; not flat, monotonous, humid plains where sheep graze and fatten for the market, but high table lands where spirits breathe. A



butcher in his shambles said, one day, "There was a time when I had no more belief in a man's living after he was dead than I have of the future existence of the ox I have just killed; but since I became a Spiritualist, I think no more of dying than of throwing off my jacket." To these lofty souls I speak of, this is the last indecency. That a man in such a connection and in such a manner should express his faith in immortality, is discouraging. It is not so much an immortal life, that such a one thinks of, an immortal activity and joy, or even the prospect of it, as it is an immortal continuity, the indefinite extension of a point, satisfactory to those who like the indefinite extension of points, but not encouraging or inspiring to those who do not consider their immortal existence to be a string measured by miles.

Another objection that those who stand upon this pinnacle of human faith make to the average belief in immortality is, that it discountenances effort in this world. It is true—sadly and bitterly true—that in proportion as people have dwelt upon the hereafter, they have neglected the here; that the greater their interest in the future, the more earnestness they have expended on the anticipation of its joys, the more cold and indifferent they have seemed to the evils which this world is urgently pressing upon their attention. There was a time

when it was distinctly taught that men might reasonably be indifferent to their circumstances, might not care whether they were rich or poor, wise or foolish, married or single, sociable or friendless, bond or free, the earthly lot being of no consequence. Life was too short to be troubled with incidental considerations; the hereafter was the only concern. That time, thank heaven! has passed away; but a modification of that view still exists, and will continue to exist as long as the mind is turned in the direction of another life that shall be but a supplement to the present. Such an expectation may not prevent people from working for their own good, improving their personal condition, increasing their private enjoyments, diminishing their individual suffering; but it will interfere with the interest they should take in others' affairs; with the earnestness with which they should attack the problems that civilization proposes; with the willingness with which they should spend and be spent for the welfare of their fellow men. It is inevitable that it should be so. It is simply impossible that people should be absorbingly interested after a selfish fashion in the hereafter, and at the same time be interested, after a noble, humane way, in their actual life.

Another objection to the popular idea of the hereafter is made on the ground that it encourages



superstition ; that it is, in fact, the basis of superstition ; that it furnishes the material upon which superstition works. If there were no hereafter, it is urged, if it were a settled and understood thing that there was no hereafter, then there would be no horrible apprehensions of hell ; no selfish hopes of heaven ; no frightful terrors ; no degrading expectations. Every man would be self-centred, forced back upon principle ; the egotistical feelings that buoy up human conceit and vanity would be dispelled. Life would be real.

The christian scheme of salvation, as it is called, with its wild mythological conceptions, its visionary and bewildering theories, its foolish and grotesque mysteries, its atonement by blood, its vicarious suffering, its mechanical justification, would be at an end. The evangelical shambles would be abolished. That would be a gain to humanity indeed ! We should no longer have to dash our brains against those awful problems of destiny, and waste our time in refuting fallacies and falsehoods ; they would have the ground taken away from beneath them. The " Evangelist of the hippodrome " would find his occupation gone. That would be an unspeakably great gain. Some noble people would cheerfully give up their belief in immortality, for the sake of putting an end, once for all, to the deplorable heathenism of revivals.

But, grave as these objections are to the popular faith, they are disarmed in the presence of a rational belief. You cannot charge selfishness upon an idea that is noble as the noblest above described. The immortality that turns upon the disavowal of self, as far as that is possible ; that counts on an enlargement of the sympathies, a developing of the affections, an increasing expansion and ennobling of the personality, is not open to any mean suspicion. You cannot charge moral indifference upon a conception of the hereafter which builds itself entirely upon magnanimity, moral earnestness and zeal ; which insists that whoever hopes for immortality hereafter must begin by being immortal here ; which contends that immortal life is for immortal souls ; which teaches that according to the worth of the human being here, will be the grandeur of the human destiny in the future. You cannot charge a belief with encouraging and fomenting superstition, whose whole tendency is to discredit superstition ; which insists on development, progress, improvement, as the essential condition of enjoyment and rest. You cannot charge indifference or selfishness or superstition upon a faith that leaves no room for them.

The faith in immortality seems to be very dear to mankind. It proves itself so, by the inevitableness of its recurrence, by the difficulty of beating it back,

by the tenacity that falls back on definition after definition, still clinging to the substance while all forms perish. If men do not believe it, they feel it. If men are not sure of it, they dream of it. It has an atmosphere of its own which the souls of men love to breathe.

I believe that in some form the faith is needful to mankind. True, men may be uplifted, noble and manly without it. It is not unfrequently the case that they are. It was so among the Greeks; it was so among the Hebrews; it is so now among a large body both in England and in America. John Stuart Mill, certainly a grand specimen of a man, lived without the faith, in its accepted form, certainly, and hoped—nay, anticipated with pleasure the approach of a time when men in general should live so. He thought it probable that in a higher condition of society, in a happier condition of the race, the thought of immortality, not the thought of annihilation, might be the burden. It was his belief that one day men would live so satisfactorily, with such full and complete fruition, that they would be ready at last to lay themselves down in a grateful sleep. That time, if it ever come, is very far off. We live in a sphere of sorrow, struggle and conflict. Faith is needed for consolation, for rest; it is needed even more for inspiration, to encourage

the workers, nerve the fighters, to give inexhaustible and indestructible valor to the heroes of humanity. The traveller crossing a desert is beguiled by the vision of a pool of water at a distance before him. Thirsting, parched, weary, instantly on seeing it a thrill of joy reanimates his frame ; he marches on in triumph ; he reaches the place, and finds that the pool is an illusion. The vision appears again. Again he takes up the toil of the march : again he is disappointed ; once more he is tempted, once more he is encouraged. When he at last reaches the end of his journey, the golden city, safe and sound, he is grateful for the sweet illusion that enabled him to reach it by cheering his flagging spirits. The wells of water he imagined that he saw were illusive, but they fed the eternal fountain of courage in his heart. The vision has faded ; the glory endures.









1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

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b r s death





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